Rashi on Song of Songs
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Rashi on Song of Songs

Chapter 1

Verse 1

“God has spoken once, twice I have heard this” (Psalms 62:12). From one verse, emerge several explanations. [However] in conclusion, a verse does not depart from its literal sense and meaning. Although the Prophets have employed metaphors, let each metaphor be explained simply, each statement fitting its context.
I have seen multiple midrashei aggada (exegetical interpretations): Some organize this entire book in one complete compilation of midrash, while others have pieces scattered in multiple places [...]
“I say that king Shlomo saw prophetically that in the future, Israel will undergo exile after exile, destruction after destruction, and they will mourn in exile for their original glory, remembering the original love by which they was seperated from all other peoples, and they wil say, ‘I will go and return to my first husband, for then I fared better than now’, and they will remember His kindnesses and their own value, and the goodly things promised to them in the eschaton. And Shlomo wrote this sefer prophetically, in the language of a widowed woman who longs for her husband, ‘who clings to her beloved’, remembering how she loved him in her youth, and [she] admits her failings. And even her Beloved is pained by her pain, and remembers the kindness of her youth, the comeliness of her beauty, and the quality of her deeds, in which he was bound up with her in intense love, and He tells her that He does not willfully bring her grief, and nor has she been sent away permanently, for she is still His wife, and He her husband, and he will return to her in the future.”
The song of songs which is Shlomo’s. Our Rabbis taught, “Every Shlomo (because they were at a loss to explain why [Scripture] did not mention his father, 1 I. e., King Dovid. as it did in Mishlei and Koheles) mentioned in Shir Hashirim is sacred [=refers to God], the King to Whom peace שָׁלוֹם belongs. 2 Maseches Shavuos 35b. It is a song which transcends above all other songs, 3 Rashi offers this explanation because he questions why does it not state, “The song which is Shlomo’s,” why is “of songs” necessary? (Sifsei Chachomim) 4 Alternatively “of songs” refers to the one thousand and five songs attributed to King Shlomo as it is stated, “and his songs were one thousand and five,” in I Melachim 5:12. (Gra) which was recited to the Holy One, Blessed Is He, by His assembly and His people, the congregation of Yisroel. Rabbi Akiva said, “The world was never as worthy as on the day that Shir Hashirim was given to Yisroel, for all the Writings are holy, but Shir Hashirim is the holiest of the holies.” Rabbi Elazar son Azaryah said, “To what can this be compared? To a king who took a se’ah of wheat and gave it to a baker. He said to him, ‘Extract for me so much fine flour, so much bran, so much

coarse bran, and produce enough fine flour from it for one loaf, sifted and superior.' Similarly, all the Writings are holy, but Shir Hashirim is the holiest of the holies, 5 Mishnayos Yodayim 3:5. for it is all comprised of fear of Heaven and the acceptance of the yoke of His kingdom." 6 Alternatively "the song of 'songs'," the plural corresponds to the dual "songs" that comprise Shir Hashirim, the song that the congregation of Yisroel praises the Holy One, Blessed is He, and the song that the Holy One, Blessed is He praises the congregation of Yisroel. (Sefer Duda'im)

Verse 2

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. She recites this song with her mouth in her exile and in her widowhood, "If only King Shlomo would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth as of yore," 7 "With the kisses of his mouth" is obviously superfluous, therefore Rashi explains that it refers to the days of yore. (Sifsei Chachomim) because in some places they kiss on the back of the hand or on the shoulder, "but I desire and wish that he behave with me as his original behavior, like a bridegroom with a bride, mouth to mouth." 8 If it were not mouth to mouth the verb נשק [=kiss] would be followed with a lamed as in Bereishis 27:26 and Ibid. 29:11, and in many other places. (Sifsei Chachomim)
For... is dearer. Your love [is dearer] to me than any banquet of wine or than any pleasure and joy. In the Hebrew language, every feast of pleasure and joy is called after the wine, as the matter is stated, "to the house of the wine feast," 9 Esther 7:8. [and as in,] "They shall not drink wine with song," 10 Yeshayahu 24:9. [and as in,] "And there were harp and lute, tambourine and flute, and wine at their drinking parties." 11 Ibid. 5:12. This is the explanation of its apparent meaning. And according to its allegorical meaning: It was said in reference to when He gave them His Torah and spoke to them face to face. And that love is still more pleasant to them than any pleasure, and they are assured by Him that He will appear to them again to explain to them the secret of its reasons and its hidden mysteries, and they beseech Him to fulfill His word. This is [the meaning of], "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth."

Verse 3

Like the fragrance of good oils. A good name is referred to as, "good oil." 12 Alternatively, "good oils" symbolize Torah and mitzvos due to their pleasant fragrance. (Sefer Duda'im)
Like the fragrance of good oils. That those dwelling at the ends of the earth smelled, [i.e.,] those who heard of Your good reputation when You performed awesome deeds in Egypt.
[Your name] is like flowing oil. Your name is thus called. It is said about you that "you are [like] oil that is constantly being poured forth so that your fragrance goes forth to a distance." For such is the nature of fragrant oil, as long as it is in a sealed bottle, its fragrance does not diffuse. If one opens it and pours its oil into another vessel, its fragrance diffuses. 13 See Rashi in Maseches Avodah Zarah 35b.
Therefore young maidens love you. Yisro came upon hearing the news and converted; also Rachav Hazonah said, "For we have heard how Adonoy dried up, etc." 14 Yehoshua 2:10. And because of this [she proclaimed], "For Adonoy your God, He is God in heaven, etc." 15 Ibid. 2.11. According to this Rashi, "maidens" represent proselytes, and because of the plural expression [עלמות], Rashi mentions two proselytes, Yisro and Rachav. (Sifsei Chachomim)

Young maidens. Virgins, since the text compares Him to a young man whose beloved holds him dear. And according to the allegory: The "young maidens" are the other nations.

Verse 4

Draw me we will run after you. I heard from your messengers a hint that you said to draw me, and I said, "We will run after you," to be as a wife to you. 16 Alternatively, You initiate, by drawing us after You and to return to You as it is stated, "Bring us to You Adonoy and we will return," in Eichah 5:21.
The king has brought me into his chambers. And even today, I still have joy and happiness that I cleaved to you.
We recall your love. Even today, in living widowhood, I always recall your first love [for me] more than any banquet of pleasure and joy.
They loved you sincerely. A strong love, a straightforward love, without deceit or intrigue, (in accordance with the expression of the verse, "and the crooked will become straight and heights will become a valley" 17 Yeshayahu 40:4.) that my ancestors and I loved you in those days. This is its simple meaning according to its context. According to its allegorical meaning: They mention before Him the loving kindness of [their] youth, the love of [their] nuptials, their following Him in the wilderness, a land of drought and darkness, and they did not even prepare provisions for themselves, but they believed in Him and in His messenger. And they did not say, "How can we go out into the wilderness, which is neither a land of seed nor food?" 18 See Yirmiyahu 2:2. But they followed Him, and He brought them into the midst of the chambers of the envelopment of His clouds. With this, they are still joyful today and happy with Him despite their afflictions and distress; and they delight in the Torah, and there they recall His love more than wine, and the sincerity of their love for Him. 19 Their love for You is much higher than the love of wine from which pleasure is derived. (Sforno)

Verse 5

I am black but comely, etc. You, my friends, let me not be light in your eyes. Even if my husband has left me because of my blackness, for I am black because of the tanning of the sun, but I am comely with the shape of beautiful limbs. Though I am black like the tents of Keidar, which are blackened because of the rains, for they are always spread out in the wilderness, I am easily cleansed to become like the curtains of Shlomo. The allegory is: The congregation of Yisroel says to the nations, "I am black in my deeds [i.e., sins], but I am comely by virtue of the deeds of my ancestors, and even some of my deeds are comely. If I bear the iniquity of the [golden] calf, 20 According to Targum the faces of the Bnei Yisroel actually turned black like the skin of the Cushites, when they sinned with the golden calf. After they repented the blackness went away. I can offset it with the merit of the acceptance of the Torah." [Scripture] calls the nations, "the daughters בְּנוֹת of Yerusholayim" because it is destined to become the metropolis for them all, as Yechezkeil prophesied, "I will give them to you as surrounding villages 21 ",לְבָנוֹת Yechezkeil 16:61. and similarly, "Ekron, and its suburbs 22 ".וּבְנוֹתֶיהָ Yehoshua 15:45.

Verse 6

Do not look upon me. Do not look upon me disrespectfully, as in, "for they had gazed [disrespectfully] upon the Ark of Adonoy." 23 I Shmuel 6:19.

That I am so black. For my blackness 24 שחרחרת is a combination of two words, שחר and חרת, the latter is the blackest of black. (Gra) and my ugliness are not from my mother's womb, but from the sun's tanning, for that blackness can easily be whitened by staying in the shade.
My mother's sons were incensed against me. These are the Egyptians among whom I grew up, and they went up with me in the mixed multitude. They were incensed against me with their enticement and their persuasion until they made me—
keeper of the vineyards. And there the sun tanned me and I became black; i.e., they made me a worshiper of other gods, but my own vineyard [i.e., my God], which was mine from my forefathers, I did not keep. We find in Scripture that leaders are called with the expression of 'vineyards,' as it is stated, "And I will give to her her vineyards כְּרָמֶיהָ from there," 25 Hosheia 2:17. which the Targum renders as, "And I will appoint for her her leaders." And similarly, "he does not turn by the way of the vineyards." 26 Iyov 24:18.

Verse 7

Tell me, you whom my soul loves. The Holy Spirit now repeatedly compares her to sheep that is endeared to the shepherd. The congregation of Yisroel says to Him, as a woman to her husband, "Tell me, You Whom my soul loves, where do You pasture Your flock [i.e., Bnei Yisroel] among these wolves 27 I.e., the nations. in whose midst they are? And where will You rest them at noon, in this exile, which is a distressful time for them, like noon, which is a distressful time 28 Because of its intense heat. for the flock?"
For why should I flit about. And if you ask, "What does it concern You?" It is not complimentary for You that I 29 I.e., Bnei Yisroel. should be like a mourner, who veils herself over the lip, weeping for my sheep. 30 I.e., weeping over the plight of my people.
Around the flocks of your companions. Near the flocks of the other shepherds, who pasture flocks as You do; i.e., among the flocks of the nations, who rely on other deities, and who have kings and princes leading them.

Verse 8

If you do not know. This is the shepherd's reply, "If you do not know where you should go to pasture your sheep, you, O fairest of women, for the shepherd has ceased leading them 31 If you are uncertain about a matter of law, follow in the footsteps of your forefathers and follow their tradition. (Sforno) —
Go forth in the footsteps of the sheep. Look at the footsteps, the way that the sheep went, and the footsteps are discernible;" traces in O.F. There are many similar instances [of עקב in Scripture, "and Your footsteps וְעִקְּבוֹתֶיךָ were not known," 32 Tehillim 77:20. [and] "your steps עֲקֻבָיו were cut off," 33 Yirmiyahu 13:22. [and] "And it will return on its heel 34 ",עָקֵב Bereishis 49:19. [meaning] that they will return in their tracks. 35 Alternatively, one who seeks God [symbolized by the shepherd], should follow the footsteps of the flock until he reaches the "shepherd." (Sefer Duda'im) You go on that path. And pasture your kids
near the dwellings of the shepherds. Among the dwellings of the other shepherds whom you are near. This is the allegory: If you do not know, My assembly and My congregation, O fairest of women, among other nations, where you should pasture and be saved from the hand of those who oppress you, to be among them, and not have your children perish, ponder the ways of your early ancestors, who accepted My Torah and kept My ordinance and My commandments, and go in their ways. As a reward for this, you will pasture your kids near the princes of the nations. And similarly

Yirmiyahu said, “Set up markers for yourself... set your heart to the path, etc.” 36 Yirmiyahu 31:20.

Verse 9

To steeds in the chariots of Pharaoh I have likened you, my beloved. This lamed is like the lamed of, “At the sound לְקוֹל of His giving an abundance of water,” 37 Yirmiyahu 10:13. and as in, “like the fragrance לְרֵיחַ of your good oils.” 38 Above 1:3. לְסֻסָתִי=] at the gathering of many steeds, for I gathered My camps to go out toward you against the chariots of Pharaoh to save you, as it is stated, “You trampled [them] in the sea with your steeds,” 39 Chavakuk 3:15. i.e., many steeds. There I silenced you [=דִּמִּיתִיךְ, My beloved; I silenced you from your cry, as it is stated, “and you shall remain silent.” 40 Shemos 14:14. I saw this in Aggadic works. Another explanation— I have likened you my beloved. There I demonstrated [=דִּמִּיתִיךְ to all that you are My beloved.
To steeds. A gathering of horses, chevalchie in O.F.
I have likened you. Adesmei in O.F., as in, “they intended דָּמוּ to kill me,” 41 Shoftim 20:5. for there 42 At the Red Sea. I adorned you with beautiful ornaments. 43 Because I intended to demonstrate that you are My beloved.

Verse 10

Your cheeks are comely with rows of gems. Rows of earrings and a golden forehead plate. 44 Alternatively, ornaments in the shape of turtledoves [=תורים] (Ibn Ezra)
Your neck with [pearl] necklaces. Golden necklaces and pearls strung on golden threads of the bounty of the [Reed] Sea.

Verse 11

Circlets of gold we will make for you. I and My tribunal decided before Pharaoh’s arrival that I should entice him and harden his heart to pursue you with all the best of his hidden treasures; so that we should make circlets of golden ornaments for you.
With spangles of silver. That were already in your possession, that you took out of Egypt; for the plunder at the sea 45 Symbolized by gold. (Sifsei Chachomim) was greater than the plunder in Egypt. 46 Symbolized by silver. (Sifsei Chachomim)
Spangles. Silver objects studded and decorated with stripes and hues.

Verse 12

While the king was at his table. The congregation of Yisroel replies and says, “All this is true. You bestowed good upon me, but I repaid You with evil, for while the King was still at the table of His wedding banquet...” 47 At Mount Sinai.
My spikenard gave out its fragrance. This expression is instead of [saying], “gave forth its stench.” When the Divine Presence was still at Sinai, I sinned with the [golden] calf; Scripture describes it with an expression of love, “gave out its fragrance,” and it did not write, “stank,” or “became putrid,” because Scripture speaks euphemistically. (See Rashi in Maseches Shabbos, Chapter “Rabbi Akiva” 48 88b. who states the reason for not writing “stank” or “ became putrid” is because of love. However according to the Tosafists explanation there, the reason that “gave out” is written instead of “abandoned its fragrance,” is because of love. However, it is not written, “stank,” or “ became putrid,” even without that reason, but because of euphemism.)

Verse 13

A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me. My beloved has become to me as one who has a bundle of myrrh in his bosom, and he said to him, "Here, [take] this bundle, which will give a more fragrant aroma than the first one that you lost." So, was the Holy One, Blessed Is He, appeased by Yisroel for the incident of the [golden] calf and found them an atonement for their iniquity and said, "Donate to the Tabernacle, and let the gold of the Tabernacle atone for the gold of the calf."
Between my breasts he shall lie. Even though I betrayed Him, He said He would dwell there. 49 I.e., in the Tabernacle.
Between my breasts. Between the two staves of the Ark. 50 Maseches Yoma 54a; the Gemara there explains that the staves of the Ark protruded into the curtain causing it to bulge like a woman's breasts.

Verse 14

A cluster of henna. There is a spice called כֹּפֶר as in, "Henna כְּפָרִים with spikenard," 51 Below 4:13. and it is shaped somewhat like clusters.
In the vineyards of Ein-Gedi. [Ein-Gedi is] the name of a place, and there it is common. I saw in Aggadah that those vineyards produce fruits four or five times a year. And this is an allegory of the many atonements and forgiveness that the Holy One, Blessed Is He, forgave them for the numerous trials with which they tried Him in the wilderness. 52 Alternatively, henna are composed of many seeds and their fragrance diffuses over great distances, symbolizing that the miracles God performed were heard from afar.

Verse 15

Behold, you are comely, my beloved. I 53 I.e., Yisroel. was ashamed of my going astray, but He encouraged me with appeasing words, saying, "I have forgiven because of your words." 54 Bamidbar 14:20. And you are most fair, for your eyes are like doves; i.e., a bride whose eyes are ugly, her entire body requires examination, but she whose eyes are beautiful, her body requires no examination. 55 See Maseches Ta'anis 24a. The allegorical meaning is: I forgave you for your iniquity, and behold you are fair with "Let us do," 56 Shemos 24:7. and you are fair with "Let us hear;" 57 Ibid. fair with the deeds of your forefathers and fair with your own deeds, because —
Your eyes are like doves. There are righteous among you who clung to Me like a dove, that once it recognizes its mate, does not allow him to mate with another. 58 Even when its mate is not there. Similarly, Bnei Yisroel do not abandon God even during the period when the Divine Presence is "hiding" from making its presence felt. (Sefer Duda'im) Similarly, "and all the sons of Leivi gathered around him," 59 Shemos 32:26. and they did not err with the [golden] calf. Another explanation [of הִנָּךְ יָפָה, behold, you are beautiful through the construction of the Tabernacle, as it is stated, "and behold, they had done it, etc. And Moshe blessed them;" 60 Ibid. 39:43. he praised them for that.

Verse 16

You are handsome, my beloved, most handsome. The beauty is not mine, but Yours; You are the handsome one.
Most handsome. For You overlooked my transgressions and caused Your Shechinah to rest in our midst. This is the praise 61 By Yisroel to God. of the descent of the fire, "and all the people saw and shouted for joy." 62 Vayikra 9:24.

Indeed our bed is fresh. Through your pleasantness, behold our couch is fresh with our sons and daughters, all of whom gather unto You here, as it is said, "and the assembly was gathered, etc." 63 Vayikra 8:4. The Tabernacle is called a bed, as it is stated, "Behold the bed of Shlomo," 64 Below 3:7. and similarly, the [Beis] Hamikdosh is called a bed, as it is said concerning Yo'ash, "in the bed chamber" which was in the "House of God," 65 II Divrei Hayomim 22:11, 12. because they are the source of Yisroel's fruitfulness and procreation.

Verse 17

The beams of our houses are cedars. This is in praise of the Tabernacle. 66 Alternatively, the beams whose function is to support the structure, symbolize the righteous whose concerns and desires are that their actions benefit and protect their entire generation. (Sefer Duda'im)
Our panels. I do not know if this רָהִיטֵנוּ is a term referring to boards or a term referring to bars, but I do know that also in the language of the Mishnah, we learned, "the 67 רָהִיטֵי The text of the Mishnah referred to by Rashi as we have it does not mention רהיטי at all, rather the text reads, the אבנות [stones] of a person's house and the קורות [beams] of his home, testify against him." However, the text that Rashi had [רהיטי ביתו של אדם] can be found in Dikdukei Sofrim and also in Radak's Sefer Hashoroshim. [panels] of a person's house testify against him." 68 Maseches Chagigah 16a. 69 Alternatively, רהט means "hasten" in Aramaic. The Targum for רץ [=run] is "רהט," see Bereishis 18:7. It therefore symbolizes the Beis Hamikdosh which King Shlomo hastened and completed in seven years.

Chapter 2

Verse 1

A rose. This is a rose 1 .חֲבַצֶּלֶת=שׁוֹשַׁנָּה Alternatively, a young rose is called חבצלת and requires the abundant sunshine of the mountains. A mature rose is called שושנה, and the climate of the valley is best suited for it. (Sefer Duda'im)
A rose of the valleys. This [rose] is prettier than the rose of the mountains because it is always moist, 2 Also, the mountain rose wilts sooner. since the sun's intensity is not strong there.

Verse 2

As a rose among the thorns. Which prick it, but it constantly retains its beauty and its redness, "so is my beloved among the daughters." They 3 The nations torment the Bnei Yisroel. entice her [i.e., Bnei Yisroel] to pursue them, to stray, as they do, after other gods, but she remains steadfast in her faith. 4 Alternatively, just as it is difficult to pick a rose from among the thorns, so too it is difficult to redeem the Bnei Yisroel from among the nations.

Verse 3

As an apple tree. When an apple tree is among trees that do not bear fruit, it is more precious than all of them, for its fruit is good both in taste and in fragrance. 5 Alternatively, Targum renders תפוח as an Esrog tree.
So is my beloved among the sons. Among the young men. The allegory is: So is the Holy One, Blessed Is He, superior to all the gods. Therefore, "in

His shade I delighted and sat.” The Midrash Aggadah [explains], this apple tree, all flee from it because it provides no shade; so did all the nations flee from the Holy One, Blessed Is He, at the giving of the Torah, but I, 6 Although the other nations fled, Bnei Yisroel perceived the eternal benefit of sitting in His shadow, by accepting the Torah. “in His shade I delighted and sat.”

Verse 4

To the banqueting-house. The Tent of Meeting, where the details and the explanations of the Torah were given. 7 Alternatively, “the banqueting-house” refers to Mount Sinai. (Targum); or to Eretz Yisroel. (Sforno)
And his banner is raised over me in love. And his gathering, that he gathered me to him, that was love to me, I still remember his love. “וְדִגְלוֹ” is atreit in O.F.

Verse 5

Sustain me. Now, as is the manner of [treating] the sick, with flagons of grape wine or with cakes of pure flour.
Refresh my bed. Spread my bed around me with apples for a good fragrance, in the manner of [treating] the sick, for I am sick for His love, for I thirst for Him here in my exile. “רַפְּדוּנִי” is an expression of a couch, as in, “where he lies יִרְפַּד on jagged rocks as if upon mud.” 8 Iyov 41:22.

Verse 6

His left hand was under my head. In the wilderness.
And his right hand would embrace me. He traveled a three-days’ journey to search out a resting place for them, 9 See Bamidbar 10:33. and in that resting place, He brought down manna and quails for them. All this I remember now in my exile, and I am sick for His love. 10 Alternatively, this verse can be viewed as a prayer by the Bnei Yisroel, for God to once again demonstrate His love and “embrace me.” (Metzudas Dovid)

Verse 7

I bind you under oath. You, the nations.
By the gazelles and the does. That you will be abandoned and preyed upon like gazelles and does.
That you do not cause hatred nor disturb this love. That is between my beloved and I, to change it or to exchange it and seek that I be lured after you.
While it still pleases. As long as it is ingrained in my heart, and He desires me.
While it still pleases. As in, “While עַד the king was at his table,” 11 Above 1:12. [i.e.,] while the king was still at his table.
That you do not cause hatred. If you cause hatred [=עֵר, as in, “and has become your adversary 12 ”,עָרֶךָּ I Shmuel 28:16. [and as in,] “And its interpretation upon Your enemies 13 ”.לְעָרָיךְ Daniyeil 4:16.
Nor disturb. As in, “one who contests מְעוֹרֵר the ownership of a field,” 14 Mishnayos Kesubos 13:6. chaloner in O.F. There are many Aggadic Midrashim, but they do not match the sequence of the topics, for I see that Shlomo prophesied and spoke about the exodus from Egypt and about the giving of the Torah, and the Tabernacle, the entry into the land [i.e., Eretz Yisroel], and the Beis Hamikdosh, the exile in Bavel, and the coming of the second Beis Hamikdosh and its destruction.

Verse 8

The voice of my beloved. The poet returns to the earlier topics, like a person who was brief with his words and later says, "I did not tell you the beginning of these events." He started by saying, "The king has brought me into his chambers," 15 Above 1:4. but did not tell how He had remembered them in Egypt with an expression of affection. And now he returns and says, "this attraction that I told you about, that my Beloved drew me and I ran after Him, happened as follows: I had despaired any redemption until the completion of the four hundred years that were [fore]told [in the Covenant] Between the Parts," 16 See Bereishis 15:13. and—
The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes. Before the end of the appointed time, as one skipping over the mountains and jumping over the hills. 17 God, as it were, skipped and jumped over the barriers of time and redeemed the Bnei Yisroel one hundred and ninety years before completion of the prophecy of the four hundred years of bondage.

Verse 9

My beloved resembles a gazelle. In the swiftness of His running, for He hastened to come like a gazelle and like a young hart. "עֹפֶר" is a young male hart.
Behold, he stands, etc. I had expected to remain detained for many more days, and behold, he informed [me] that He was standing and peering through the windows of heaven at what was being done to me, as it is stated, "I have indeed seen the affliction of My people, etc." 18 Shemos 3:7.

Verse 10

Spoke. עָנָה is] an expression of answering and an expression of a loud cry, The following is the precedent for them all, "And the Levi'im are to respond [...in a loud voice]." 19 Devarim 27:14.
And said to me. Through Moshe.
Rise up. "I will bring you up from the affliction of Egypt." 20 Shemos 3:17.

Verse 11

For behold, the winter is past. There is no difficulty in traveling now. "סְתָיו" is winter. The Targum of חֹרֶף [=winter] is 21 .סְתָוְא Bereishis 8:22.

Verse 12

The blossoms have appeared on the land. The days of summer are near, when the trees blossom and the travelers enjoy seeing them.
The time of singing has come. When the birds emit song, and pleasant sounds for travelers.
And the voice of the turtledove. According to its apparent meaning, turtledoves and young pigeons. It is the nature for birds to sing and chirp in the days of Nissan.

Verse 13

The fig tree has produced its green figs. [To be understood] according to its apparent meaning.
And the grapevines with tender grapes. When the blossom falls, and the grapes become separated from one another, and each grape is discernible by itself, it is called "סְמָדַר." This entire section, according to its simple meaning, is an expression of a loving seduction, by which a young man appeals to his betrothed to follow him; so did my beloved do to me.

My beloved spoke. Through Moshe.
And said to me. Through Aharon.
Rise up. Hurry yourself, "and let each man borrow from his neighbor." 22 Shemos 11:2.
For behold, the winter is past. These are the four hundred years of [exile]. I skipped them by counting them from Yitzchok's birth. 23 See Rashi in Bereishis 15:13.
The rain. Which is the hardship of winter, is over and gone, i.e., eighty-six years of harsh slavery were decreed upon you, and they have passed. From the time that Miryam was born, the Egyptians intensified the bondage upon Yisroel; and therefore, she was called Miryam [= מִרְיָם, because they made it bitter [=מַר for them. 24 See Shemos 1:14.
The blossoms have appeared on the land. Behold Moshe and Aharon are available for you to fulfill all your needs.
The time of singing has come. For you are destined to recite a song by the [Reed] Sea. 25 See Shemos 15:1-19.
And the voice of the turtledove. The voice of the great guide [=26 .תַּיָּר Moshe Rabbeinu. Another explanation: "קוֹל הַתּוֹר" means the tiding [=קול that the time [=27 תור See Esther 2:12, where Rashi explains that תור means time [= זמן]. has arrived for your exodus from Egypt.
The fig tree has produced its green figs. The time to bring the first fruits has arrived, for you will enter the land [of Yisroel].
And the grapevines with tender grapes. The time of the wine libations has drawn near. Another explanation: The worthy among you ripened and produced good deeds before Me and emitted a pleasant fragrance.
Arise [my beloved] go forth. A superfluous yud לָכִי is written, meaning, "rise up to receive the Ten 28 The numerical value of yud is ten. Commandments."
Another explanation— The fig tree has produced its green figs. These are the sinners of Yisroel, who perished during the three days of darkness. 29 See Rashi in Shemos 10:22. "פגים" are unripened figs, and refer to the wicked among the Bnei Yisroel who spurned redemption, i.e., those who perished during the three days of darkness. And the grapevines with tender grapes
have emitted fragrance. These are the ones who remained of them; 30 Shemos 14:10. they repented and were accepted. So it is interpreted in Pesikta.

Verse 14

My dove, in the clefts of the rock. This is said regarding the time when Pharaoh pursued them and overtook them camping by the sea. With no place to escape in front of them because of the sea, and they could not turn to the side because of wild beasts. What did they resemble at that time? A dove that was fleeing from a hawk and entered the clefts of the rocks, where a snake was hissing at her. Should she enter inside, there was the snake; should she go outside, there was the hawk. The Holy One, Blessed Is He, said to her [Yisroel], "Show Me your countenance," [i.e.,] the quality of your deeds, to whom you turn in time of distress.
Let me hear your voice. "And the Bnei Yisroel cried out to Adonoy." 31 Tehillim 107:27.
In the clefts of. In the crannies; this is a term referring to a breach, and similar to this is, "They were frightened וַיְזוֹגְגוּ and they staggered," 32 Yeshayahu 19:17. [and,] "And the land of Yehudah will be for Egypt a dread 33 ",לְחָגָּא II Shmuel 10:4. and in the plural form [Scripture] calls them חַגְוֵי [=cracks]. Similarly, [the plural form of] קָצָה [=end] is קְצָוֵי[=ends], and similarly, "and he cut their garments 34 ".מַדְוֵיהֶם These are the terraces that are dug into hills around fortifications.

Cliff. Eschelons, in O.F. When they make a ditch around the towers and pour the earth above it to raise the mound around it, they make it in many levels, one above the other.
In the concealment of the cliff. There are sometimes holes in them, and reptiles and birds enter therein.

Verse 15

Seize for us the foxes. The Holy One, Blessed Is He, heard their voice; He commanded the sea, and it washed them away. That is [the meaning of], "Seize for us the foxes," [i.e.,] the little one with the big ones, for even the [Egyptian] little ones were destroying the vineyards, 35 I.e., the Bnei Yisroel. when our vineyards were still "with tender grapes," when the grapes were tiny. 36 I.e., the children were young. When a Jewish woman would give birth to a male and hide him, the Egyptians would enter their homes and search for the males, but the baby was hidden, and he was a year or two old. They would bring a baby from an Egyptian home; the Egyptian baby would speak, and the Jewish baby would answer him from the place where he was hidden, and they would seize him and cast him into the river. Now why does [Scripture] call them foxes? Just as the fox looks to turn back and flee, so too did the Egyptians look behind them, as it is stated, "I shall flee from before Yisroel." 37 Shemos 14:25.
Little foxes. It is written without a vav שֻׁעָלִים, because He punished them through water, which was measured with the stride [=שֻׁעָל of the Omnipresent. 38 See Yeshayahu 40:12.

Verse 16

My beloved is mine, and I am his. He demanded all His needs from me. He commanded only me, to make the Pesach sacrifice, sanctify the firstborn, make a Tabernacle, sacrifice burnt offerings; and He did not demand [these things] of any other nation.
And I am his. All my needs I requested of Him, and not of other gods.
Who pastures. His sheep.
Among the roses. In a good, pleasant, and beautiful pasture.

Verse 17

Until the sun spreads. This refers to the preceding verse, "My beloved is mine, and I am his," 39 Above Verse 16. until the time that the iniquity caused the sun to darken me in the heat of the day, and the heat intensified. 40 See Above 1:5-7.
And the shadows flee. We sinned with the [golden] calf; we sinned with the spies, "and the shadows flee," [i.e.,] the merits that protected us [disappeared because] we broke off His yoke.
You turned away my beloved. I caused him to leave me on mountains which were far away from me.
Distant. An expression of separation and distance. 41 Alternatively, הרי בתר means split mountain and is referring to the Mount of Olives which will be split as per the prophecy of Zecharyah [14:4]. Thus, the meaning of בתר is similar to "he split [ויבתר] them up in the center," in Bereishis 15:10.

Chapter 3

Verse 1

On my bed at night. In my distress, when I lived in the darkness 1 The Bnei Yisroel were left in darkness after the Clouds of Glory had withdrawn from them and the holy crown that had been given to them at Mt. Sinai was taken away. (Targum) for the entire thirty-eight years 2 After the sin of the spies it was declared that the Bnei Yisroel would wander in the wilderness for forty years. Since two years had already past, they had to wander for another thirty-eight years and during this time the Divine Presence was hidden from them. that the [Bnei] Yisroel were under reproach.
I sought him but did not find him. "For I will not go up in your midst," 3 Shemos 33:3. This was on account of the golden calf. [and] "for I am not in your midst." 4 Devarim 1:42. This was on account of the spies.

Verse 2

I will rise now... I will seek. "And Moshe prayed," 5 Shemos 32:11. [and] "I will go up to the Adonoy." 6 Ibid. 32:30.

Verse 3

The watchmen found me. Moshe and Aharon. 7 They guarded the Bnei Yisroel from sin during the Egyptian exile. Also in reference to Ezra and Nechemyah who watched over the Bnei Yisroel during the exile of Bavel. (Alshich)
Him whom my soul loves, have you seen him. What [message] did you find in His mouth?

Verse 4

Scarcely had I departed from them. Shortly after their parting from me, 8 I.e., shortly after the deaths of Moshe and Aharon. at the end of the forty years.
When I found. That He was with me in the days of Yehoshua to conquer the thirty-one kings.
I grasped him and would not let him go. I did not loosen my grasp on Him until I brought Him to the Tabernacle at Shiloh because of all this that He had done for me.

Verse 5

I bind you under oath. The nations, while I was exiled among you.
That you do not cause hatred nor disturb the love of my beloved from me through seduction or enticement, to forsake him and to turn away from following him.
While it still pleases. As long as I still desire his love.

Verse 6

Who is this ascending from the wilderness. When I was traveling in the wilderness and the pillar of fire and the cloud were going before me, killing snakes and scorpions and burning the thorns and thistles to make a straight path, and [when] the cloud and the smoke were ascending, the nations saw them, and marveled at my greatness, and they would say, "Who is this?" i.e., "How great is she [Bnei Yisroel] who is ascending from the wilderness, etc.!"
With palm-like pillars of smoke. Tall and erect as a palm tree [=תְּמָרָה.
In a cloud of myrrh. [It is so called] because the cloud of incense which would rise straight up from the inner altar.
Perfume seller. A spice merchant who sells all types of spices.

Powders. [It is so called] because they crush it and pound it [until it becomes] as fine as dust.

Verse 7

Behold the bed of Shlomo. The Tent of Meeting and the Ark, 9 This is in accordance with Rashi in 1:1 above that Shlomo refers to God, thus "the bed of Shlomo" refers to the resting place of the Divine Presence. which they carried in the wilderness.
Sixty mighty men are around it. Sixty myriads surround it.
Of the mighty men of Yisroel. Of those who went into the army, excluding those under twenty and those over sixty.

Verse 8

Skilled in battle. The battle of Torah, and likewise, the kohanim who surround it, who camp around the Tabernacle, are skilled in the order of their service.
Each with his sword. His weapons are the Masorah [i.e., tradition] and the mnemonics, by which they preserve the correct version and the traditional rendition, so that it will not be forgotten.
For fear of the nights. For if they forget it, and troubles will befall them. And similarly it states, "Arm yourselves with the grain lest He become angry and you lose the way." 10 I.e., study the Torah.

Verse 9

A canopy has [King Shlomo] made. This refers to the Tent of Meeting, which was established in the Tabernacle at Shiloh; He made for Himself a crowning canopy for [His] glory.

Verse 10

Its covering. His resting place and His dwelling were on the Ark cover, which is gold. 11 See Shemos 25:17, 22.
Its curtain of purple wool. This is the dividing curtain, 12 Separating the "Holy Place" from the "Holy of Holies," See Shemos 26:31,33. which hangs and "rides" on poles from pillar to pillar.
Its interior bedecked. It was arranged with a floor [displaying] love; 13 Alternatively, "its interior filled with burning love." In Yeshayahu 6:6, "רצפה" means "burning coal." (Tzror Hamor) the Ark and its cover, cherubim and Tablets.
From the daughters of Yerusholayim. These are the [Bnei] Yisroel, who fear and are wholehearted toward the Holy One, Blessed Is He.

Verse 11

Daughters of Tzion. Children who are distinguished מְעוּנָנִים=עֵינָו as His, through circumcision, phylacteries, and ritual fringes. Upon the crown with which his mother adorned him. The Tent of Meeting, which was adorned with hues of blue, purple, and scarlet. Rabbi Nechunya said, "Rabbi Shimon son of Yochai asked Rabbi Elazar the son of Rabbi Yose, 'Perhaps you heard from your father what is meaning of "upon the crown with which his mother adorned him"?' He replied, "This is a parable of a king who had an only daughter of whom he was very fond. He could not stop loving her until he called her "my daughter," as it is stated, "listen daughter and see." 14 Tehillim 45:11. He could not stop loving her until he called her "my sister," as it is stated, "Open for me, my sister, my love." 15 Below 5:2. He could not stop loving her until he called her "my mother," as it is stated, "Listen to Me, My people, and My nation וְלְאֻמִּי give ear

to Me.” 16 Yeshayahu 51:4. “וּלְאִמִּי” is written [without a vav and can be read as “וְלְאִמִּי” “and to my mother”]. Thereupon Rabbi Shimon son Yochai stood up and kissed him on his head, etc.
On the day of his wedding. The day of the giving of the Torah, 17 See Mishnayos Ta’anis 4:8. when they crowned Him as their King and accepted His yoke.
And on the day his heart rejoiced. This is the eighth day of the installation, 18 See Vayikra 9:1. on which the Tabernacle was dedicated in the wilderness.

Chapter 4

Verse 1

Behold you are beautiful my beloved. He praised them and appeased them, and their sacrifices pleased Him.
Until the sun spreads. When they sinned before Me, 1 The captioned text of Rashi belongs to Verse 6 below; Rashi comments here to inform us until when did the sacrifices please God. in the days of Chofni and Pinchas. 2 See I Shmuel 2:12-17.
Your eyes are like doves. Your hues, appearance and characteristics 3 I.e., עינ֫יך here does not mean your “eyes” but your “characteristics,” i.e., appearance, as in כעין הבדלח, meaning, “as the appearance of crystal,” in Bamidbar 11:7. (Sifsei Chachomim) are like those of a dove, which cleaves to its mate, and when they slaughter it, it does not struggle but stretches forth its neck; so have you given your shoulder to bear My yoke and My fear. From within your kerchief;
your hair is like a flock of goats. This praise is allegorized as the praise of a woman beloved by her bridegroom [who says to her], “Within your kerchief, your hair is beautiful and shines with brilliance and whiteness, like the hair of white goats descending from the mountains, and whose hair shines from a distance.” And the allegory with which he compares the congregation of Yisroel is as follows: From within your camps and your dwelling places, even the empty ones among you 4 See Rashi in Verse 3 below. are as dear to Me as Yaakov and his sons, who trailed down from Mount Gilad when Lavan overtook them there. 5 See Bereishis 31:23. Another explanation, like those who mobilized against Midyan beyond the Yardein, which is in the land of Gilad. This version is in Midrash Shir Hashirim.
From within. This מִבַּעַד is a term meaning “from within,” for the majority of ‘בְּעַד’ in Scripture refers to something that covers and shields against something else, as in, “and He sealed up וּבְעַד the stars,” 6 Iyov 9:7. [and as in,] “the earth [closed] its bars against me 7 ”,בַּעֲדִי Yonah 2:7. [and as in,] “Can He judge through הַבָּעַד the heavy darkness?” 8 Iyov 22:13. And ‘9 ’מִבַּעַד The equivalent of ‘בעד’, with the mem as a prefix. is the thing that is within that ‘בְּעַד’[=covering], therefore, it says ‘מִבַּעַד’[=from within].
Your kerchief. An expression denoting an object which confines the hair so that it does not show, and this refers to a kerchief and ribbons. It is impossible to interpret ‘צַמָּתֵךְ’ [meaning] a veil צָעִיף, where the tav is a radical, for if so, it should have been punctuated with a dagesh when immediately preceding a hey, which makes it in the feminine possessive, or a vav, which makes it in the masculine possessive, like the tav of ‘שַׁבָּת [Shabbos]’, which, when used in the feminine possessive form, is punctuated with a dagesh, as in, “her festival, her new moon, and her Shabbos 10 ”,וְשַׁבָּתָהּ Hosheia 2:13. 11 Bamidbar 28:10. and similarly in the masculine form, “the burnt offering of each Shabbos in its Shabbos 12 ”.בְּשַׁבַּתּוֹ Vayikra 13:41. But the tav of ‘צַמָּתֵךְ’, is not punctuated with a

dagesh, we must perforce conclude that it comes instead of a hey, and the noun denoting kerchief is צָמָּה, and when it is possessive, to render it either in the masculine or in the feminine form the hey is converted to a tav without a dagesh, e.g., שִׁפְחָה [handmaiden] is converted in order to say שִׁפְחָתוֹ [his handmaiden] or שִׁפְחָתָהּ [her handmaiden]. And similarly אָמָה [maidservant] becomes אֲמָתוֹ [his maidservant] or אֲמָתָהּ [her maidservant]. [And similarly,] עֶרְוָה [nakedness] becomes עֶרְוָתוֹ [his nakedness] or עֶרְוָתָהּ [her nakedness]. And similarly in this case, צָמָּה [kerchief] becomes צַמָּתוֹ [his kerchief], צַמָּתָהּ [her kerchief], or צַמָּתִי [my kerchief], צַמָּתֵךְ [your kerchief].
Descending. That were plucked. The word גִּבֵּחַ [bald] is rendered by the Targum as 13 .גְּלוּשׁ Corresponding to "כעדר הקצובות," i.e., "like a counted flock." When the animals descend from the mountain, the mountain becomes bald and bare of them.

Verse 2

Your teeth are like a counted flock, etc. This praise, too, is expressed in terms of a woman's beauty.
Your teeth. Are fine and white and arranged in their proper order like wool and like the order of a flock of ewes, selected from the rest of the flock by count and number, 14 Corresponding to "שעלו מן הרחצה," i.e., "who have come up from the washing." and are assigned to a clever and capable shepherd to be careful with their wool, because they make them into fine woolen garments. They watch them from the time of birth, that the wool should not become soiled, and they wash them daily. 15 Tehillim 38:4.
All of which are perfect. An expression of perfection, [as in,] "There is no perfection תָּמִים in my flesh," 16 See Bamidbar 31:1-7. i.e., "whole" תְּמִימוֹת=מַתְאִימוֹת, entires in O.F.
And [none are] blemished. There is no miscarriage or defect among them. This allegory was stated in reference to: The mighty men of Yisroel, who cut down and consume their enemies surrounding them with their teeth, and yet they distance themselves from robbing from [Bnei] Yisroel and from lewdness, so that they should not become sullied with sin. This praise was stated concerning the twelve thousand men who mobilized against Midyan with a count and a number, 17 Ibid. 31:49. of whom not one was suspected of lewdness, as it is stated, "and not a man among us is missing." 18 Ibid. 31:11-12. And even for improper thoughts they brought atonement offerings. Also, they were not suspected of theft, for Scripture attests regarding them, "And they took all the spoils... and they brought it to Moshe and to Elazar the kohein, etc.," 19 Yehoshua 2:18. and not one of them concealed even one cow or one donkey.

Verse 3

Like a scarlet thread are your lips. Beautiful to promise and to keep their promise, as the spies did to Rachav Hazonah. They said to her, "[you shall bind] this line of scarlet thread, etc.," 20 Alternatively, your lips were thin and red as a scarlet thread, a sign of beauty in a woman. (Metzudas Dovid) and they kept their promise. 21 Yechezkeil 33:30.
And your speech. Your speech, and this is from the structure of, "who speak הַנִּדָּבָרִים against you near the walls," 22 Malachi 3:16. [and as in,] "Then the God fearing men spoke 23 ",נִדְבְּרוּ See Rashi in Maseches Avodah Zarah 30b. parlediz in O.F.
Your cheeks. This is the upper part of the face, called pomels in O.F., next to the eyes. And in the language of the Talmud, it is called " the pomegranate of the face." 24 'רקתך', from 'רק', meaning empty; see Bereishis 37:24. It resembles the split half of a pomegranate from the outside, which is red and round. This is a praise in terms of a woman's

beauty. Our Rabbis explained the allegory as follows: Even the worthless 25 See Verse 1 above. ones רֵיקָנִים among you are full of mitzvos as a pomegranate. 26 Iyov 35:11.
From within your kerchief. From within your kerchief.

Verse 4

Your neck is like the Tower of Dovid. An erect posture is a sign of beauty in a woman. The allegorical meaning is: "Like the Tower of Dovid," i.e., the fortress of Tzion, is a place of strength, stronghold, and a fortress. So is "your neck," i.e., the Chamber of Hewn Stone, which was Yisroel's strength and fortification, and that tower was built as a model of beauty, so that everyone should look at it, to study its forms and the beauty of its architecture. The word תַּלְפִּיוֹת is of the grammatical structure of, "He teaches us מַלְּפֵנוּ more than the beasts of the earth," 27 Whose radicals are respectively רמה and בנה. and the first tav in תַּלְפִּיוֹת is [a prefix] like the first tav in תַּרְמִית [deceit] and תַּבְנִית [construction]. 28 Yirmiyahu 51:11.
A thousand shields are hung upon it. It was the custom of the princes to hang their shields and their quivers on the walls of the towers.
Quivers. Quivers in which they place arrows, as in, "Prepare the arrows, fill the quivers 29 ",הַשְּׁלָטִים I.e. Teaching [אלף] the Torah acts as a shield [המגן]. and it corresponds to the Chamber of Hewn Stone, from where instruction goes forth, for the Torah act as a shield to Yisroel. 30 I Divrei Hayamim 16:15. It is also possible to render that אֶלֶף הַמָּגֵן is the same as מָגֵן הָאֶלֶף, the shield of the thousand, alluding to, "the word [of the Torah] He commanded for a thousand generations." 31 Alternatively, שלטי are shields. (Metzudas Tzion)
All the quivers of the mighty. We find that disciples are described as arrows and quivers, 32 The shields represent the great scholars of each generation. (Gra) as the matter is stated, "Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of youth. Fortunate is the man who has filled his quiver with them." 33 Tehillim 127:4-5.

Verse 5

Your two breasts. Which nourished you. This refers to Moshe and Aharon. Like two fawns, twins of a gazelle. It is a gazelle's nature to bear twins, similarly, they [Moshe and Aharon] are equal, this one to that one. 34 This is in accordance with Rashi in Shemos 6:26 who states "there are places where the Torah sets Aharon ahead of Moshe and there are places where it sets Moshe ahead of Aharon, to tell you that they were equal." Another explanation, "Your bosom," is a reference to the Tablets, "twins of a gazelle," they are equal with one measure; five commandments on this one and five on the other, each commandment corresponding to the other. 35 I.e., the five commandments on one side of the Tablets correspond to the five commandments on the other side of the Tablets. "I [am Adonoy...]," 36 ,אָנֹכִי Shemos 20:2. corresponds to, "You shall not murder," 37 ,לֹא תִרְצָח Ibid. Verse 13. for the murderer diminishes the image of the Holy One, Blessed Is He. "You shall not have other gods," לֹא 38 ,יִהְיֶה לְךָ Ibid. Verse 3. corresponds to, "you shall not commit adultery," 39 ,לֹא תִנְאָף Ibid. Verse 13. for one who commits idolatry is like an adulterous woman who takes strangers while bound to her husband. "You shall not take 40 לֹא תִשָּׂא Ibid. Verse 7. [the name of Adonoy your God in vain]," corresponds to, "You shall not steal," 41 ,לֹא תִגְנֹב Ibid. Verse 13. for one who steals will eventually swear falsely. "Remember [the day of Shabbos]," 42 ,זָכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת Ibid. Verse 8. corresponds to, "You shall not bear [false witness]," 43 ,לֹא תַעֲנֶה Ibid. Verse 13. for one who profanes the Shabbos testifies falsely against his Creator, saying that He did not rest on the Shabbos of Creation. "Honor [your father and

mother],” 44 ,כַּבֵּד אֶת אָבִיךָ וְאֶת אִמֶּךָ Ibid. Verse 12. corresponds to, “You shall not covet,” 45 ,לֹא תַחְמֹד Ibid. Verse 14. for one who covets 46 His friend’s wife. will eventually beget a son who [unknowingly] slights him and honors one who is not his father.
Who pasture. Their sheep among the roses and guide them on a tranquil and straight path.

Verse 6

Until the sun spreads. Until the sun spreads.
And the shadows flee. That is the time of intense heat, the hottest time of the day. I will save you, and you are pleasant to me.
The sun. הַיּוֹם here means] “the sun,” 47 Usually it means “the day.” and similarly, “in the direction of the sun 48 ”,הַיּוֹם Bereishis 3:8. and similarly, “for behold, the sun הַיּוֹם comes, burning like a furnace,” 49 Malachi 3:19. and once the sun has spread, “I will go to Mount Moriyah,” into the eternal Temple, [from] Bereishis Rabbah, 50 Bereishis Rabbah 55:7. i.e., from when they sinned before Me by profaning My sacred offerings and by spurning My meal offerings in the days of Chofni and Pinchas. 51 See I Shmuel 2:12-17. I will leave you and I will abandon this Tabernacle, and I will choose for Myself Mount Moriyah, into the eternal Temple. And there, “you are completely beautiful... and you are without blemish,” 52 Below Verse 7. and there I will accept all your sacrifices.

Verse 7

Verse 8

With me [will you come] from Levanon O bride. When you are exiled from this Levanon [Beis Hamikdosh], with Me you will be exiled, for I will go into exile with you.
With me from Levanon will you come. And when you return from the exile, I will return with you, and also throughout the exile, I will be distressed in your distress. 53 See Yeshayahu 63:9. Therefore, [Scripture] wrote, “with me from Levanon will you come.” When you are exiled from this Levanon, you will come with Me, and [Scripture] does not write, “With me to Levanon will you come,” to denote that from the time of your departure from here until the time of your return, I am with you wherever you will go and come.
You will look from the peak of Amanah. When I gather your dispersed ones, you will look and ponder what is the reward of your actions from the beginning of your faith [=מֵרֹאשׁ אֲמָנָה that you believed in Me, [e.g.,] your following Me in the wilderness, 54 See Yirmiyahu 2:22. and your travels and your encampments at My command, 55 See Bamidbar 9:17-23. and your coming to the peak of Snir and Chermon, which were the lions’ dens, Sichon and Og. Another explanation, “מֵרֹאשׁ אֲמָנָה” [=from the peak of Amanah], this is a mountain on the northern boundary of Eretz Yisroel, named Amanah. In the language of the Mishnah, 56 Maseches Gittin 8a. [these are] the mountains of Amnon [or] Mount Hor, about which it is stated, “from the Great Sea you shall draw a line extending to Mount Hor.” 57 Bamidbar 34:7. When the exiles gather and arrive there, they will look from there and see the boundary of Eretz Yisroel and the air of Eretz Yisroel, and they will rejoice and offer thanks. Therefore, it is stated, “תָּשׁוּרִי [=You will sing] from the peak of Amanah.”

Verse 9

You captured my heart. You have drawn My heart to you.
With but one of your eyes. Of the many good characteristics that you possess, if you had only one, I would love you dearly, and all the more so with all of them. And similarly, "with one necklace of your necklaces," with but one of the chains of your necklaces. These are the adornments of commandments through which the [Bnei] Yisroel are distinguished. Another explanation of "בְּאַחַד עֲנָק," with one of your forefathers, [the one] referred to as, "was one," 58 Yechezkeil 33:24. the one singled out, and this is Avrohom, who is called עֲנָק [=a giant], "the greatest man among the giants 59 ".בָּעֲנָקִים Yehoshua 14:15.

Verse 10

How beautiful is your love. Every place where you showed me affection is beautiful in My eyes; Gilgal, Shiloh, Nov, Givon, and the eternal Temple. That is what the [poet] from Bavel composed, "A resting place and other meeting places," "resting place" refers to Yerusholayim, and "other meeting places" refers to each place where the Divine Presence met with Yisroel.
And the fragrance of your oils. Your good name.

Verse 11

Honey. [Which is] sweet.
Your lips drip. [With] explanations of Torah.
And the fragrance of your garments. The proper commandments pertaining to your garments; ritual fringes, blue thread, the garments of a kohein, and the prohibition of sha'atnez [=wool and linen].

Verse 12

A locked garden. This refers to the modesty of the daughters of Yisroel, who are not of loose morals. 60 Alternatively, 'גן' refers to the Pentateuch which has fifty-three sidros, the numerical value of 'גן'. (Gra)
A locked up spring. This can be explained as a term referring to a fountain, as in, "upper fountains 61 ",גֻּלּוֹת Yehoshua 15:19. and it can also be explained as a term referring to a gate, and it is an Aramaic term in the Talmud, "lock the gates 62 ".גְּלֵי Maseches Berachos 28a.

Verse 13

Your arid fields. Dry land is called בֵּית הַשְּׁלָחִין [=thirsty land], and it necessary to irrigate it constantly; a field watered by rain [=בֵּית הַבַּעַל is superior to it. 63 The Mishnah in Bava Basra describes בית הבעל as a field in the valley that is moist and does not require irrigation. (Sifsei Chachomim) Here he praises the arid field, "Your arid fields" are replete with all good like a pomegranate orchard. This is said of the smallest of Yisroel, who are succulent with good deeds like a pomegranate orchard.
Henna with spikenard. These are types of spices.

Verse 14

Verse 15

You are a garden spring. All this refers back to, "Your arid fields," and he praises them like a fountain which irrigates them. The allegory is: It

refers to the immersions of purification which the daughters of Yisroel immerse themselves.
And flowing streams from Levanon. From a place of cleanliness, without the murkiness of mud.

Verse 16

Awake, wind from the north, and come, wind of the south. Since they are pleasing to me— your fragrance and the beauty of your dwellings, I command the north and south winds to blow upon your garden so that your good fragrance should spread afar. The allegory is: It refers to the ingathering of the exiles, and from all the nations they will bring them as an offering to Yerusholayim, and in the days of the rebuilding [of the Beis Hamikdosh], the [Bnei] Yisroel will be gathered there for the festivals and for the pilgrimages, and Yisroel will reply, "Let my Beloved come to His garden," for if You are there, all are there.

Chapter 5

Verse 1

I have come to my garden. In the days of the dedication of the Beis Hamikdosh.
I have gathered. I gathered, and it is a term of the Mishnah, "as much space [as is required by] a gatherer אוֹרֶה and his basket." 1 Mishnayos Shvi'is 1:2. The term אורה there refers to the harvest of figs. (Sifsei Chachomim) It is also a term found in Scripture, "and all wayfarers have plucked וְאָרוּהָ its fruit." 2 Tehillim 80:13. And this was stated in regard to the incense, which they burned as an individual incense offering—the tribal princes on the outside altar and it was accepted. 3 This incense offering was unusual in two ways. First, because it was an individual offering instead of a communal one; and because it was burned on the outer altar instead of the inner [golden] altar. This is something that does not apply to later generations. Because of this, it is stated, "I have eaten my sugar cane with my sugar." There is honey that grows in canes, as it is stated, "into the sugar of the יַעְרַת canes," 4 I Shmuel 14:27. and "יַעְרַת" is a term referring to a cane, as in, "and she placed [it] among the reeds 5 ",בַּסּוּף Shemos 2:3. [which Targum renders] "and she placed it in the reeds בְּיַעֲרָא." And the sugar is sucked out and the wood is discarded. But I, out of great love, "ate my sugar cane with my sugar," I ate the cane with the sugar, the inedible with the edible, [signifying] the freewill incense offering, 6 The incense offering is symbolized by 'myrrh,' because it is one of its most important ingredients. and likewise, the he-goats sin-offering that the tribal princes sacrificed, although a sin-offering is not brought as a freewill sacrifice, but I accepted them on that day.
I have drunk my wine. These are the libations.
With my milk. They were sweeter and clearer than milk. 7 Alternatively, חלבי, means my fat, referring to the fat portions of the peace offerings.
Eat [my] friends. Aharon and his sons, in the Tent of Meeting, and all the kohanim, in the eternal Temple.
Drink and become intoxicated [my] beloved ones. These are the Israelites 8 It does not refer to the kohanim because they are forbidden to drink wine or any intoxicating beverage before performing the divine service. who ate the flesh of the peace offerings that they sacrificed for the dedication of the altar.

Verse 2

I slept. When I was confident and calm in the first Beis Hamikdosh, I despaired of worshiping the Holy One, Blessed Is He, as one who slumbers and falls fast asleep.
But my heart was awake. This is the Holy One, Blessed Is He. This is expounded in the Pesikta. 9 Alternatively, ולבי ער, refers to the prophets and the sages who were constantly exhorting and rousing the Bnei Yisroel to rise from their spiritual sluggishness. (Sforno)
But my heart was awake. The Holy One, Blessed Is He, Who is, "the Rock of my heart and my portion," 10 Tehillim 73:26. is awake to guard me and to benefit me.
A sound! My beloved knocks. He rests His Divine Presence upon the prophets and He warns through them by, "rising early and sending forth." 11 Yirmiyahum 7:25.
Open for me. Do not cause Me to depart from you.
For my head is drenched [as though] with dew. A term referring to a man who comes at night, knocking on the door of his beloved. He says thus, "Out of love for you, I have come at night at the time of dew or rain." And the allegory is as follows: "For my head is drenched [as though] with dew," because I am full of good will and satisfaction with Avrohom your forefather, 12 ראשי alludes to Avrohom who was first [=ראש] to believe in God. (Sifsei Chachomim) whose deeds were pleasing to Me as dew. And behold, I come to you, laden with blessings and the payment of reward for good deeds if you return to Me.
My sidelocks drip with the rains of the night. In My hands there are also many categories 13 Rendering קבוצותי as קבוצותי [=collections]. of types of retribution, to punish those who forsake Me and anger Me. "Dew" is a term indicating pleasure.
Rains of the night. The rains of the night, which cause hardship and weariness. רְסִיסֵי is the Targum of רביבים [=drops], "and like raindrops וְכִרְבִיבִים upon blades of grass," 14 Devarim 32:2. [is rendered as,] "and the late rains קְוָצוֹת ". וכרסיסי [=locks] are clumps of hair of the head stuck together, called flocels in O.F. And because Scripture adopted an expression of dew and rain, it adopted an expression of head and sidelocks, for it is ususal for dew and rain to stick to the hair and sidelocks. It is also possible to interpret both "dew" and "rains of the night," both denoting good, [i.e.,] the reward for minor precepts that are easy to perform as "dew," and the reward for major precepts that are difficult [to perform], as the hardship of the "rains of the night."

Verse 3

I have removed my robe. I.e., I have already accustomed myself to other ways; 15 According to Metzudas Dovid, it refers to the exiles living in Bavel who became accustomed to life there and were not interested in returning to Eretz Yisroel. I can no longer return to You, as the matter is stated, "But ever since we stopped burning incense to the ruling queen of the heavens, etc.," 16 Yirmiyahu 44:18. for these ways were proper in their eyes. The expression, "I have removed my robe... I have washed my feet," is the language of the reply of an adulterous wife, who does not want to open the door for her husband. And since the verse began with the expression, "I slept...a sound! My beloved knocks," it concludes with an expression of a reply that is apropos to the expression of knocking on the door at the time of retiring to sleep at night.

Verse 4

My beloved sent forth his hand from the portal. Which is beside the door; and I saw his hand, and the stirring of my insides swayed me to return to his love and to open [the door] for him.

Verse 5

I arose to open for my beloved and my hands dripped myrrh. I.e., wholeheartedly and with a desiring soul, as one who adorns herself to endear herself to her husband with a pleasant scent.
Flowed with myrrh. A fragrance that flows and spreads in all directions.

Verse 6

But my beloved had vanished and gone. He was hidden and concealed from me, as in, "the roundness of your flanks," 17 Below 7:2. i.e., the hidden places חֲמוּקֵי of your thighs, because the thigh is hidden. [And as in,] "Until when will you hide 18 ",תִּתְחַמָּקִין Yirmiyahu 31:21. [i.e.,] will you hide and cover yourself because of the shame that you betrayed Me?
My soul departed as he spoke. For he said, "I will not come into your house because at first you did not wish to open [the door]."

Verse 7

I sought him, etc. The watchmen found me, those who go about the city. And apprehend thieves who prowl at night.
They struck me they wounded me. They inflicted a wound upon me. 19 I.e., by striking me they inflicted a wound. Alternatively, the double expression [struck, wounded] represents the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdosh and the second Beis Hamikdosh. Every "פֶּצַע" denotes a wound [inflicted] by a weapon, 20 Rashi in Shemos 25:21 defines "פצע" as "a wound that draws blood." navredure in O.F.
My ornament. My jewelry that was hammered and beaten out, upon me. The entire episode is an expression [using the terms] of the wife of one's youth who grieves for the husband of her youth and searches for him. The following is the allegorical meaning:
My beloved sent forth his hand from the portal. When I said, "I have washed my feet," 21 Above Verse 3. and I will not open for You, and I will not repent of the idolatry that I have chosen.
Sent forth his hand. And He demonstrated His vengeance in the days of Achaz, and He brought upon him the king of Aram's army. [It states,] "and they smote him and captured from him a great captivity, etc. And Pekach the son of Remalyah slew in Yehudah one hundred and twenty thousand in one day." 22 II Divrei Hayomim 28:5-6.
And my innards longed for him. Chizkiyahu, his son, came and repented with all his heart to seek the Holy One, Blessed Is He, and his entire generation was wholehearted; there never arose a generation like them in Yisroel, as is explained in "Cheilek," "They searched from Dan to Be'ersheva and did not find an ignoramus, from Gabas to Antochya, and did not find a man or a woman who was not proficient in the laws of ritual contamination and purity." 23 Maseches Sanhedrin 94b. The eleventh chapter in entitled "Cheilek." This is [the meaning of], "my hands dripped myrrh, etc." Also, regarding Yoshiyahu it is stated, "Before him there had never been a king like him, etc.," 24 II Melochim 23:25. Because he saw the punishment which had come upon Menashe and upon Ammon, thereby fulfilling [the words], "he sent forth his hand from the portal, and my innards longed for him."
I opened for my beloved but my beloved had vanished and gone. He did not annul His decree, as it is stated about Chizkiyahu, "Behold, days are coming when everything in your palace will be carried off, etc.... [some] of your sons... whom you will beget." 25 Yeshayahu 39:6-7. These are Doniyeil, Chananyah, Misha'eil, and Azaryah, and also concerning Yoshiyahu, through Chuldah the prophetess [it states], "Behold, I am

bringing calamity upon this place and upon its inhabitants, etc." 26 II Melochim 22:16. And it states, "Before him there had never been a king like him... Nevertheless, God did not relent from His great wrath, for His wrath burned against Yehudah, because of all the provocation with which Menashe had provoked Him. And Adonoy said, 'I will remove Yehudah, too, from My Presence as I have removed Yisroel, and I will reject this city.'" 27 Ibid. 23:25-27.
My soul departed as he spoke. It left me when He spoke of this matter. 28 Alternatively, my soul departed as a result of my intense prayers by which I sought to annul these harsh decrees.
I sought him but could not find him. Now if you should ask, "Was not Yirmiyahu standing and prophesying during the days of Yehoyakim and Tzidkiyahu, 29 See Yirmiyahu 3:14, 22. [And similarly Malachi said,] 'Return to Me, and I will return to you' 30 Malachi 3:7. This indicates that their sincere repentance would completely have annulled the decree. Therefore, Rashi explains that repentance would "not nullify the decree entirely, but to lighten, etc." "? [This was] not to nullify the decree, but to lighten the punishment and to prepare their kingdom upon their return from the exile, to plant them without uprooting and to build them without demolishing.
The watchmen found me. Nevuchadnetzar and his armies.
Those who go about the city. To wreak the vengeance of the Omnipresent.
They stripped my ornament. The Beis Hamikdosh.
[Even] the guards of the walls. Even the ministering angels, who were guarding its walls, as the matter is stated: "On your walls, O Yerusholayim [I posted guards], etc." 31 Yeshayahu 62:6. They ignited the fire upon it, as the matter is stated, "From above He has hurled fire, etc." 32 Eichah 1:13.

Verse 8

I bind you under oath. The nations, Nevuchadnetzar's men, who saw Chananyah, Misha'eil, and Azaryah submit themselves to the fiery furnace, 33 See Daniyeil 3:20-23. and Doniyeil to the lions' den 34 See Ibid. 6:17-18. because of prayer, and Mordechai's generation in the days of Haman.
When you find my beloved. In the future, on the Day of Judgement, when it will be requested of you to testify about me, as the matter is stated, "Let them present their witnesses, and they will be vindicated." 35 Yeshayahu 43:9. See Maseches Avodah Zarah 3a.
What will you tell him. You will testify on my behalf that because of love for Him, I suffered harsh afflictions among you. Let Nevuchadnetzar come and testify, let Eliphaz and Tzophar and all the prophets of the nations come and testify about me that I fulfilled the Torah.

Verse 9

With what does your beloved excel another beloved. This is what the nations were asking Yisroel, "What is it about your God more than all the other gods, that you allow yourselves to be burned and hanged because of Him?" 36 I.e., why are you so loyal to a God Who has forsaken you? (Metzudas Dovid)
That you bind us under oath. To testify before Him about your love.

Verse 10

My beloved is pure white. White, as in, "they were whiter וּמֵחָלָב than milk." 37 Eichah 4:1.

And ruddy. I will first explain the entire section according to its simple meaning, as the praise of the handsomeness of a young man, when he is white and his face is ruddy.
Surrounded by myriads. He is surrounded by many armies; His armies are many. Many myriads are called 'רְבָבָה', as it is stated, "Myriads רְבָבָה like the vegetation of the field have I made you." 38 Yechezkeil 16:7.

Verse 11

His head. Shines like the finest gold. 'כ'ת'מ' 39 כֶּתֶם' is an acronym representing the three crowns: תורה [=Torah], כהונה [=priesthood], and מלכות [=kingship], mentioned in Avos 4:13. (Gra) is a term referring to the treasures of kings which they store in their treasure houses, and similarly, "the finest gold כֶּתֶם has changed," 40 Eichah 4:1. and similarly, "and fine gold כֶּתֶם וְלַכֶּתֶם I called my security," 41 Iyov 31:24. and similarly, "and an ornament of fine gold 42 ".כֶּתֶם Mishlei 25:12.
His locks hang. תַּלְתַּלִּים is] is an expression of hanging תְּלוּיִים, pendelojes in O.F.
They are raven-black. All these are handsomeness for a young man.

Verse 12

His eyes are like doves upon brooks of water. His eyes by brooks of water are as beautiful as doves' eyes. Brooks of water are pleasant to behold, and the young men go there to swim. And so the poet praises the eyes of "my beloved," when he gazes upon the brooks of water, they resemble the beauty of the eyes of doves.
Bathed. [I.e.,] the eyes of my beloved in milk.
Well set in their fullness. All this is an expression of beauty. They neither protrude excessively nor are they sunken, but they are well set מְלֵאת in their socket. (Other editions: the eye according to the socket.) The literal meaning parallels the allegorical meaning. It מְלֵאת is a term used for anything made to fill a socket which is made for it as a setting, as in, "stones for setting 43 ",מְלֵאִים Shemos 25:7. [and as in,] "And you shall set וּמִלֵּאתָ into it settings מִלֵּאת of stone." 44 Ibid. 28:17.

Verse 13

His cheeks are like a bed of spice. Wherein those beds are growths of perfume.
Like towers of perfumes. Aromatic plants, growths מִגְדָּלוֹת of spices מֻרְקָחִים. which are compounded with the art of an apothecary. 45 And processed into perfume.

Verse 14

Rolls of gold. Like gold wheels.
Studded with precious gems. Every term referring to the setting of a precious stone in gold is called מִלֵּאת [=setting].
Sparkle. An expression as in, "They became fat; they became thick ".עָשְׁתוּ 46 Yirmiyahu 5:28. A thick mass is called 47 ,עֶשֶׁת Alternatively, עשת means sparkle or radiate, as in, "shining [עשות] iron," in Yechezkeil 27:19. (Metzudas Tzion) masiz in O.F.
Ivory. From an elephant's tusks.
Overlaid with sapphires. Adorned and decorated with sapphires, an expression [as in], "48 ",וַתִּתְעַף Bereishis 38:14. which the Targum renders, "and she adorned herself."

Verse 15

His legs. Are like pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold.
Pillars of marble. Pillars of marble שֵׁשׁ=שֵׁשׁ, and a similar word appears in Megillas Esther, "upon silver rods and marble שֵׁשׁ columns." 49 Esther 1:6. His appearance is as tall as the cedars of the Levanon.
Chosen like the cedars. Chosen among the sons as the cedar among the other trees.

Verse 16

[The words of] his palate are sweet. His words are pleasant.
This is my beloved. This is the likeness of my beloved, and this is the likeness of my friend, and because of all these [attributes] I have become sick for his love. The allegorical meaning, regarding the Holy One, Blessed Is He, is as follows:
My beloved is pure white. And white, [anxious] to whiten my iniquities.
[He is] clear and white, when He appeared at Sinai, He appeared as an old man, teaching instructions, and similarly, when He sits in judgment, "His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like clean wool." 50 Doniyeil 7:9.
And ruddy. To exact punishment from His enemies, as the matter is stated, "Why is Your clothing red?" 51 Yeshayahu 63:2.
Surrounded by myriads. Many armies 52 I.e., angels, as it is written "a thousand thousands served Him, and myriad myriads stood before Him," in Daniyeil 7:10. (Metzudas Dovid) surround Him.
His head is [like] finest gold. The beginning of His words shone like finest gold, and similarly it says, "The introduction of Your words illuminates." 53 Tehillim 119:130. He began, "I am Adonoy your God." 54 Shemos 20:2. He showed them first that He has the right of sovereignty over them, and He then issued His decrees upon them.
His locks hang. Upon every point [=קוֹץ are heaps [=תִּלִּים and heaps of laws. 55 See Maseches Eruvin 21b.
They are raven-black. Because it [the Torah] was written before Him in black fire on white fire. 56 See Rashi Devarim 33:2. Another explanation, "His locks hang," when He appeared on the sea, He appeared like a young man mightily waging war.
His eyes are like doves upon brooks of water. Like doves, whose eyes gaze toward their windows, so His eyes [gaze] upon the synagogues and study halls, for over there are the sources of Torah, which is compared to water. 57 See Maseches Bava Kama 17a.
Bathed in milk. When they look into the judgment, they clarify the law truthfully, to justify the just, to give him what he deserves, and to condemn the guilty, to repay his [evil] way upon his head.
Well set in their fullness. In the fullness of the world. They wander over the entire earth, 58 See Zecharyah 4:10. gazing upon the good and the evil. 59 See Mishlei 15:3. Another explanation, עֵינָיו symbolizes] Torah scholars, 60 See Rashi in Maseches Ta'anis 24a. whom the Holy One, Blessed Is He, designates as eyes to enlighten the world, just as the eyes enlighten man. "Like doves" that wander from dovecote to dovecote to seek their food, so do they [Torah scholars] go from the study hall of one sage to the study hall of another sage, to seek out explanations of Torah.
Upon brooks of water. Upon study halls, which are the sources of the water of Torah.
Bathed in milk. Since he calls them [Torah scholars] eyes, and the eye is a feminine noun, "bathed" רוֹחֲצוֹת is in the feminine conjugation. They cleanse themselves with the milk of Torah and whiten 61 I.e., clarify. its secrets and mysteries.
Well set in their fullness. They resolve the matters appropriately.
Another explanation, "His eyes," [means] "its contents" עֵינָיו=עִנְיָנָיו; the sections of the Torah, the laws, and Mishnayos, are "like doves" which

are beautiful in their walk, "upon brooks of water," [i.e.,] in the study halls, "bathed in milk," they are made clear as milk, as I have explained.
His cheeks. The commandments at Mount Sinai, where He showed them a friendly and smiling demeanor.
His lips are like roses. The commandments that He spoke in the Tent of Meeting, which were for appeasement and for atonement and for a pleasant fragrance; [these are] the law of the sin offering, the guilt offering, the meal offering, 62 Alternatively, "his lips" represent His prophets who spread His word like the fragrance of spices. (Metzudas Dovid) the burnt offering, and the peace offering.
His hands. The Tablets, which He gave with His right hand, and are His handiwork. 63 See Shemos 32:16. The Tablets are symbolized by hands, each one with five fingers, corresponding to the five commandments on each Tablet. (Melo Haomer)
Rolls of gold. These are the commandments, about which it is said, "They are more desirable than gold, than even much fine gold." 64 Tehillim 19:11. Rabbi Yehoshua the son of Nechemyah said, "They [i.e., the Tablets] were made miraculously; they were of sapphire, yet they were rolled גְּלִילֵי." Another explanation [of גְּלִילֵי], because they [i.e., the Tablets] bring about מְגַלְגְּלוֹת much good to the world.
Studded with precious gems. For He included in the Ten Commandments the six hundred and thirteen commandments. 65 See Rashi in Shemos 24:12. There he quotes Rav Sa'adia Gaon's Sefer Hamitzvos wherein he connects the 613 mitzvos to the Ten Commandments.
His innards sparkle like ivory. This is [Chumash] Vayikra which was placed in the center of the five books [i.e., the Pentateuch], like the intestines, which are set in the center of the body.
Sparkle like ivory overlaid with sapphires. It [Chumash Vayikra] appears as smooth as a block of ivory, and is arranged with many details, [e.g.] similar wordings, general principles, and inferences drawn from minor premises to major ones.
Set in sockets of fine gold. Rabbi Elazar Hakapar said, "This pillar has a capital above and a base below." Rabbi Shmuel the son of Gada said, "The sections of the Torah have a capital above and a base below, and they are connected [to the sections] preceding them and [to the sections] after them, e.g., the sections of the Sabbatical Year and the Jubilee are [connected to] 'And if you sell something,' 66 Vayikra 25:14. to inform you how severe a minor infraction of the Sabbatical year is," 67 If one does business with produce during the Sabbatical year, he will eventually be forced to sell all his property. as it appears in Tractates Sukkah 68 40b. and Arachin. 69 30b. Also, for example [the section], "May Adonoy... appoint a man over the assembly," 70 Bamidbar 27:16. is [connected to] "Command...My offering, My food." 71 Ibid. 28:2. Before you command Me about My children, 72 To appoint a leader over the congregation of Yisroel. command them about Me [i.e., My offering], and similarly, there are many. Therefore, it is stated, 'His legs are like pillars of marble set in, etc.'"
His appearance is like Levanon. Whoever reflects and ponders over His words finds in them blossoms and sprouts, like a blooming forest. So are the words of Torah, whoever meditates over them constantly discovers new explanations in them.
Chosen. Selected, like the cedars, which are chosen for building and for strength and for height. 73 Alternatively, referring to Bnei Yisroel, who became His "chosen" people at Mount Sinai when He gave us the Torah, as Scripture states in Shemos 19:5-6.
[The words of] his palate are sweet. His words are pleasant, [as in,] "And an incision for the dead you shall not make in your flesh... I am Adonoy," 74 Vayikra 19:28. faithful to pay reward. Is there a palate sweeter than this? Do not wound yourselves, and you will receive reward.

[In addition,] “And when a wicked man repents from his wickedness and performs justice and righteousness, he shall live because of them.” 75 Yechezkeil 33:19. Iniquities are accounted to him as merits [after he repents]. Is there a palate sweeter than this?

Chapter 6

Verse 1

Where has your beloved gone. The nations taunt and provoke Yisroel, “Where has your Beloved gone?” Why has He left you abandoned like a widow? 1 Alternatively, where has He gone? (Gra)
Where has your beloved turned. When He returned and rested His Spirit upon Coresh, and he granted permission to build the Beis Hamikdosh, and they began to build, they [the nations] came and said to them, “Where has your Beloved turned?” 2 Alternatively, what does He occupy Himself with now? (Gra) If He is returning to you, we will seek Him with you, as the matter is stated, “Now the adversaries of Yehudah and Binyamin heard that the people of the exile were building a Temple, etc. And they approached Zerubavel, etc., ‘Let us build with you, for, like you, we seek your God, etc.” 3 Ezra 4:1-2. But their intention was sinister, [and] in order to stop them from the work. And they replied—

Verse 2

My beloved has gone down to his garden. He commanded us to build His Temple, and He will be there with us. 4 Alternatively, He has gone to the “Garden” of Eden. (Gra)
To the beds of spices. The place where the incense is burned.
To graze in the gardens. And further, He has gone to graze His sheep in the gardens where they were scattered, [i.e.,] those who did not come up from the exile, He rests His Divine Presence upon them in the synagogues and in the study halls. 5 He occupies Himself by delighting in the presence of the righteous. (Gra)
And to gather roses. He listens and hearkens to those who speak His Torah, to collect their merits and to inscribe them in a memorial book before Him, as the matter is stated, “Then the men who fear Adonoy spoke, etc.” 6 Malachi 3:16. And concerning your request to seek Him with us, and to build with us, “I am my Beloved’s,” but you are not His, and you shall not build with us, as the matter is stated, “It is not for you and for us to build a House for our God,” 7 Ezra 4:3. and it states [further], “and you have no portion or right or memorial in Yerusholayim.” 8 Nechemyah 2:20.

Verse 3

Who grazes among the roses. Who grazes his sheep in a calm and goodly pasture.

Verse 4

You are beautiful, my beloved, as Tirtzah. And the Holy One, Blessed Is He, praises her for this [reply, and says], “You are beautiful, My beloved,” when you are desirable 9 I.e., where you perform deeds that please me, interpreting תרצה as כרצויה. Alternatively, תרצה is a city in Eretz Yisroel that was captured by Yehoshua [see Yehoshua 12:24]. It is renowned for its beauty. to Me. So it is expounded in Sifrei.

Comely. Are you now as at first in Yerusholayim. 10 Which is described as "perfect in beauty' in Tehillim 50:2.
Awesome as the hosts [of angels]. Legions of angels. I will cast your awe upon them so that they should not wage war and stop you from the work, as it is stated in Ezra. 11 5:5.

Verse 5

Turn your eyes away from me. Like a young man whose betrothed is dear and pleasing to him, and her eyes are comely, and he says to her, "Turn away your eyes from me, for when I see you, my heart becomes haughty and proud, and my spirit becomes arrogant, and I cannot resist."
Made me haughty. They made my heart haughty, as in, "And their pride וְרָהְבָּם is toil and pain," 12 Tehillim 90:10. [and as in,] "They are haughty רָהָב but idle," 13 Yeshayahu 30:7. asoajier in O.F. The allegorical meaning is as follows: The Holy One, Blessed Is He, said, "In this Beis Hamikdosh, it is impossible to restore to you the Ark, the Ark cover, and the cherubim, which excessively endeared you to Me in the first Beis Hamikdosh, to show you great affection, until you betrayed Me."
Your hair is like a flock of goats. The young, tender, and insignificant ones among you, are praiseworthy.

Verse 6

Your teeth. The officers and the mighty that are among you are entirely good.
Like a counted flock. The ewe can entirely be utilized for holy purposes: its wool is for blue thread, its flesh for sacrifice, its horns for shofars, its thighs for flutes, its intestines for harp [strings], its hide for a drum. But the wicked [i.e., nations] were likened to dogs, for they are entirely unuseable for holy purposes.

Verse 7

Verse 8

There are sixty queens. [Referring to] Avrohom and his descendants. The sons of Keturah are sixteen. Yishmael and his sons are thirteen. Yitzchok and his sons are three. The sons of Yaakov are twelve. The sons of Eisav are sixteen. [All of the above are listed] in Divrei Hayomim 14 Chapter 1., and total sixty. And if you should say that Timna 15 Eisav's granddaughter. should be excluded because she is a woman, then count Avrohom in the number [of sixty].
And eighty concubines. [If you count] Noach and his sons until Avrohom, [i.e.,] all the generations of those who left the Ark, you will find them to be eighty. And just as the queens, who are the kings' wives, are superior in greatness over the concubines, so were Avrohom and his offspring deemed greater and superior to all, as you will see. Hagar was the daughter of kings. Timna was the daughter of rulers and became Eisav's concubine, and it states, "to the Valley of Shaveh, etc." 16 Bereishis 14:17. [meaning,] they all unanimously resolved הֶשְׁוּוּ=שָׁוְוה and crowned Avrohom as king over them.
And young maidens without number. All these were divided into many families.

Verse 9

But she is unique my dove. And of all of them, 17 All the nations mentioned in the previous verse. she 18 I.e., Yisroel. is My chosen one, like a perfect dove, who is wholehearted with her mate.
She is unique to her mother. To her assembly. 19 I.e., allegorically the word לְאֵמָה is understood to mean לְאוּמָה [=nation]. Many arguments take place in the study halls, all of them stem from the desire to understand Torah in its fundamentals and according to its true meaning.
She is pure to her who begot her. Yaakov saw that his bed [i.e., progeny] was perfect without any disqualification, and he thanked and praised the Omnipresent, as it is stated, "And Yisroel bowed down at the head of the of the bed." 20 Bereishis 47:31. He bowed in gratitude that all his children were righteous.
Daughters saw her. [Other nations saw] Yisroel in her greatness.
And acclaimed her. And what is their praise?

Verse 10

Who is this that gazes down. Upon us, [looking] from a high place to a low place is called "הַשְׁקָפָה." So is the Beis Hamikdosh higher than all lands. 21 See Maseches Kiddushin 69a.
Like the [breaking] dawn. Which gradually illuminates little by little; so were the [Bnei] Yisroel during the second Beis Hamikdosh. In the beginning, Zerubavel was the governor of Yehudah, but not a king, and they were subjugated to Persia and to Greece, but afterwards, the house of Chashmonai defeated them and they became kings.
Awesome as the hosts [of angels]. Awesome with her mighty men like the bannered legions of kings. All this the Holy One, Blessed Is He, praises the congregation of Yisroel, [beginning with] "You are beautiful, my beloved, as Tirtzah," 22 Above, verse 4. and the entire section until here.

Verse 11

I went down to the garden of nuts. This too is the words of the Divine Presence, "Behold, I have come to this second Beis Hamikdosh, to you."
To see the moist plants of the valley. What moisture, [i.e.,] good deeds I would see in you.
Whether the vine has blossomed. Whether you would blossom before Me [into] Torah scholars, scribes, and teachers.
If the pomegranates had sprouted. Those who fulfill the commandments are full of merits. Why are [Bnei] Yisroel compared to a nut? Just as this nut, you see it entirely of wood [shell], and what is inside is not discernible, and you crack it and find it full of compartments of edible food, so are the [Bnei] Yisroel modest and humble in their deeds, and the students among them are not discernible, and they do not boast by announcing their own praise. But if you examine him, you find him full of wisdom. There are many additional Midrashic interpretations of this matter. Just as if this nut falls into mud, its inside does not become sullied, so are the [Bnei] Yisroel exiled among the nations and they suffer many blows, but their deeds do not become sullied.

Verse 12

I did not know. The congregation of Yisroel laments, "I did not know how to be aware of sin, that I should retain my glory and my greatness, and I erred over groundless hatred and controversy, which intensified during the reign of the Chashmonai kings, Horkenus and Aristoblus, 23 They were brothers who battled one another for the throne. until one of them brought in the Roman Empire and received the kingship from its hand and

became its vassal. Since then, "my soul set me" to be "like chariots," to let the nobility of other nations ride upon me.
A noble people. עַמִּי נָדִיב means] the same as עַם נָדִיב[=a noble people]. The yud is superfluous like the yud of, "the One Who took up His abode שֹׁכְנִי=שֹׁכֵן in the thornbush," 24 Devarim 33:16. [and as in,] "stolen גְּנֻבַת=גְּנֻבָת by day," 25 Bereishis 31:39. [and as in,] "populous ".רַבָּתִי=רַבַּת 26 Eichah 1:1.
My soul set me. I myself appointed them over me, as the matter is stated, "and you accustomed them to be officers in charge over you." 27 Yeirmiyahu 13:21.

Chapter 7

Verse 1

Turn back, turn back [you] perfect one. They say to me, "Turn back, turn back" from following the Omnipresent.
Perfect one. You who are perfect 1 According to Rashi שולמית originates from the root שלם [=complete]. Alternatively, it refers to the residents of Yerushalayim, whose original name is שלם. See Targum in Bereishis 14:18. (Gra and Ibn Ezra) in your faith with Him, "turn back, turn back" 2 "Turn back" is mentioned four times in this verse, alluding to the four exiles, i.e., the four powers that subjugated the Bnei Yisroel. (Tzror Hamor) to us.
That we may observe you. We will appoint [=וְנֶחֱזֶה from you governors and rulers, as in, "And you shall discern תֶּחֱזֶה from all the people." 3 Shemos 18:21. So did Rabbi Tanchuma expound. Another explanation for "that we may observe וְנֶחֱזֶה you," is that we will ponder what greatness to give you, but she says, "What can you offer the perfect one?" What greatness can you give me, that will equal my greatness, or even the greatness of the banners of the encircling מְחוֹלוֹת encampments 4 The Bnei Yisroel's encampments [=מחנים] were in the form of circles [=מחולות] when they were in the wilderness. (Sforno) in the wilderness?

Verse 2

How fair were your feet in sandals. They say to her, "We want you to cleave to us because of the beauty and prominence that we saw in you when you were still beautiful." 5 For Bnei Yisroel to be "beautiful" on Yom Kippur when there is a prohibition against wearing shoes, is not unusual. "How fair were your feet in sandals," refers to the rest of the year, when people are faced with all sorts of temptations, and if their feet remain nonetheless "fair," that is truly "beautiful" and praiseworthy. (Chasam Sofer)
How fair were your feet. In the festive pilgrimages, 6 I.e., in your going up to Yerusholayim to celebrate the three festivals. "פעמיך" alluding to the "three times [פעמים] a year," mentioned in Devarim 16:16, that pilgrimages were made. See Maseches Chagigah 3a. Alternatively, "פעמיך" refers to "feet" because at times [=פעמים] they are covered with shoes and at times they are bare. (Sefer Dudaim) O daughter of nobles! The roundness of your flanks are like jewels. A collection of gold jewelry is called "חֲלִי כֶתֶם" [=jewels of gold], al chali in Arabic. Our Rabbis expounded that this term is referring to the drainage holes in the [altar's] foundations for the libations, which existed since the six days of creation, and they are round like a thigh; "כְּמוֹ חֲלָאִים" is a term denoting digging, as in, "that which has been dug out חֲלִית of a pit." 7 Maseches Eiruvin 78a.

The work of a craftsman. The hands of the Holy One, Blessed Is He, 8 I.e., He fashioned these drainage holes. as explained in Maseches Sukkah. 9 49a. אָמָּן is the same as אוּמָּן [craftsman]. The praise of the Holy One, Blessed Is He, that the [Bnei] Yisroel praise Him [is] from top to bottom. They begin with, "His head is [like] finest gold," 10 Above 5:11. and continuously descend to, "His legs are like pillars of marble," 11 Above 5:15. because they come to appease Him, to draw down His Divine Presence from the heavenly abodes to the earthly abodes. But, He enumerates their praise from bottom to top, starting with, "How fair were your feet פָּעֲמַיִךְ," these are the feet, and He continues and enumerates until, "that which is upon your head is like Mount Carmel," 12 Below 7:6. until He comes to draw them to Him.

Verse 3

You navel is like a round bowl. Your navel is like a basin of clear water in which they bathe, and it is made of marble, which in Arabic it is called sahar. Because the navel is shaped like a round hole, [Scripture] compares it to a round basin. 13 Alternatively, Scripture compares its roundness to the shape of the moon. The Targum for ירח is סהרא, in Bereshis 37:9. (Metzudas Dovid and Metzudas Tzion) This praise is not in reference to a woman's beauty as the above praise, because in the above, her beloved praises her, but here, her friends praise her about her deeds, saying, "you are worthy to join us." And the allegory is: It refers to the Chamber of Hewn Stone, which is situated in the "navel" [i.e., center] of the world. 14 I.e., the Beis Hamikdosh. Sanhedrin who convened in this chamber were seated in a semi-circle, like the crescent moon, so they should be able to look at each other and communicate properly; see Maseches Sanhedrin 36b-37a.
Which lacks not for mixed wines. Drink will not cease from there; i.e., there will neither fail nor cease from there any words of instruction. 15 From the Sanhedrin, for they are a never ending source of wisdom.
Your stomach is a heap of wheat. Which everyone needs.
Hedged about with roses. Fenced and hedged about with a fence of roses. A light fence suffices her [i.e., Yisroel], and no one breaches it to enter. For example, a bridegroom enters the wedding canopy, his heart longing for the wedding ceremony and for the love of his marriage. When he comes to have relations with her, she says to him, "I have seen a drop of blood like a mustard seed," so he turns his face to the other side. [Now] no snake bit him, and no scorpion stung him. [Another example,] one is passing along the way and sees freshly ripened fruit at the top of the fig trees. As he stretches out his hand to take, they tell him, "These belong to owners," and he too withdraws his hand because of theft. This is the meaning of "hedged about with roses." 16 Alternatively, סוגה is in reference to the "fences" [=סיג] enacted by the Rabbis, i.e., the Rabbinic establishment of cautionary rules as a safeguard against the transgression of the laws of the Torah itself. (Metzudas Tzion)

Verse 4

Your two breasts. The two Tablets. Another explanation, the king and the kohein gadol. 17 Alternatively, the two redeemers, Moshiach Ben Dovid and Moshiach Ben Ephrayim. (Targum)

Verse 5

Your neck. The Temple and the altar, which are erect and tall, and the Chamber of Hewn Stone, 18 The meeting place for the Sanhedrin. which is also there, made for strength and for a shield, "like an ivory tower."

Your eyes. Are like pools in Cheshbon, through which water flows, so are your eyes by the gate of the multitudes. Your sages, when they sit at the gates of Yerusholayim, the city of multitudes, and are involved in the calculation חֶשְׁבּוֹן of the seasons and the signs of the constellations, their wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the nations flow like pools of water. Alternatively, "בְּרֵכוֹת חֶשְׁבּוֹן" can be explained as "doves," and this is the language of the Mishnah, "One who buys the doves of a dovecote, he must let the first brood בְּרִיכָה fly away," 19 See Maseches Beitzah 10a. kovedes in O.F.
Your face is like a tower of Levanon. I cannot explain this אַפֵּךְ to mean a nose, neither with respect to the simple meaning nor in reference to its allegorical meaning, for what praise of beauty is there in a nose that is large and erect as a tower? Therefore, I say that "אַפֵּךְ" means a face, and the reason it is used in the singular form and does not state [the plural form], "אַפַּיִךְ," is that it speaks of the forehead, which is the main distinguishing feature of the face, as the matter is stated, "The features of their faces testifies against them." 20 Yeshayahu 3:9. And you could prove this, because he continuously praises them from bottom to top, 21 See Rashi in verse 2 above. [and] "Your eyes are like pools in Cheshbon," [was already mentioned,] And so do the nations praise, "and your forehead is strong against" 23 A reference to the nose would therefore be out of sequence. the forehead of all who come to harm you and to entice you. Like a tower of Levanon,
looking out as far as Damascus. I saw in the Midrash that this is the house of the Levanon forest, which [King] Shlomo made. Whoever stands on it can look and count how many houses there are in Damascus. Another explanation, your face looks towards Damascus, [i.e.,] looks forward to the coming of the gates of Yerusholayim until Damascus, for it is destined to expand as far as Damascus. 24 Yechezkeil 3:8.

Verse 6

That which is upon your head is like Mount Carmel. These are the phylacteries of the head, about which it is stated, "And all the peoples of the world will see that the Name of Adonoy is proclaimed over you, and they will fear you." 25 See Zecharyah 9:1. This is their strength and they are as awe inspiring as a cliff of the mountains, and Mount Carmel is the most prominent of the mountains.
And the braid of your head. The braided hair of your Nazirites are as beautiful with commandments as braided purple wool.
And the braid of your head. [It is called דַּלַּת because the braid is lifted up [=מֻדְלֶּלֶת over the crown of the head.
Your King is bound in its tresses. The name of the Omnipresent is bound in the [Nazir's] locks, as it is stated, "The crown of his God is upon his head." 26 Devarim 28:10.
Tresses. Koranz in O.F. This is what they call the girding laces with which they tie the girdles. Another explanation [of], "Your King is bound in its tresses," the Holy One, Blessed Is He, is bound with love to you through [your fulfillment of His] commandments, and through the swiftness [=27 וְהָטִים Bamidbar 6:7. with which you run before Him.

Verse 7

How beautiful and pleasant are you. After having praised each limb in detail, Scripture includes everything [in one phrase], "How beautiful" in your entirety, "and [how] pleasant are you" to cleave to you with a love that is proper to delight in.

Verse 8

Such is your stature, likened to a [stately] palm tree. We saw the beauty of your stature in the days of Nevuchadnetzar, when all the nations were kneeling and falling before the image, 28 See the last note in 1:17 above. but you stood as upright as this palm tree.
And your breasts are like clusters. Daniyeil, Chananyah, Mishaeil, and Azaryah, who were for you like breasts to suck from. They were likened to clusters, which provide drink, so did they provide lavishly and teach everyone that there is no God like your God. Until this point, the nations praised him [i.e., Yisroel]. From here on, are the words of the Divine Presence addressing Yisroel's exiles, who were among the nations.

Verse 9

I said, I will ascend the palm tree. I boast of you among the heavenly hosts, that I will be exalted and sanctified through your actions in the earthly abodes, when you will sanctify My Name among the nations.
I will grasp its branches. And I will grasp and cleave to you; "סַנְסִנָּיו" are branches.
And now let your breasts.. And now, make true My words, that you will not be enticed to follow the nations, and may the good and wise among you be steadfast in their faith, to retort to those who entice them, so that the lesser ones among you will learn from them.

Verse 10

And let your speech be like good wine. Be cautious with your answers that they should be like the best wine. 29 See Daniyeil, chapter 3.
It flows for my beloved in sincerity. I am careful to answer them that I will remain steadfast in my faith, and my speech will go before my Beloved with sincere love, which comes from the heart, and not with deceit and guile.
Like good wine. Which makes the lips of the sleeping murmur. Even my ancestors in the grave will rejoice with me and give thanks for their lot. 30 I.e., your answers should be clear and potent. "דּוֹבֵב" [means] causing to move, fromier in O.F. and its root, is an expression of speech. And this is the answer, "I am my Beloved's and He longs for me." 31 The comparison to wine is because the taste of wine remains in one's mouth long after drinking it. The mere mention of the words of the departed sages, causes their lips to murmur in their graves. See Maseches Yevamos 97a and Rashi there.

Verse 11

Verse 12

Come, my beloved, let us go out to the field. Our Rabbis expounded in [Maseches] Eruvin, that the congregation of Yisroel said, "Master of the Universe, do not judge me like dwellers of cities, where there is robbery and immorality, but 32 Below, verse 11. like the open village dwellers, who are craftsmen and are occupied in the study of Torah amidst hardship." 33 Maseches Eruvin 21b.
Let us lodge in the villages. Let us lodge among the disbelievers [=כּוֹפְרִים. Come and I will show You Eisav's descendants, upon whom You have lavished prosperity, but who do not believe in You. 34 Sifsei Chachomim amends Rashi's text to read..."but let us go out to the field and I will show You Torah scholars who are occupied in the study of Torah amidst hardship." (Sifsei Chachomim)

Verse 13

Let us rise early for the vineyards. These are the synagogues and the study halls.
Let us see if the vine has blossomed. These are those who are versed in Scripture.
If the tender grapes have appeared. When the blossom falls off and the grapes are discernible, that is the appearance of the tender grapes. And he compares those versed in the Mishnah to them, because they are nearer [than those versed in Scripture] to derive pleasure 35 Alternatively, let us eat manna. "בכפרים" is derived from כפר [=frost] which is the manna's description, in Shemos 16:14. Free us from having to earn a living and we will dedicate ourselves to you. (Tzror Hamor) in the instruction of the Torah.
If the pomegranates are in bloom. When they are ripe, and the flower around them falls off; "הֵנֵצוּ" means "its flower falls off." He compares those versed in the Talmud to them, for they are at the level of maturity in [Torah] wisdom that is worthy to teach.
There I will give my love. There I will show You my honor and glory of my sons and daughters. 36 Than those who are versed in Scripture.

Verse 14

The baskets emit fragrance. The baskets of the good and the bad figs, as the matter is stated, "Adonoy showed me, and behold, two baskets of figs, etc. one basket of very good figs, etc., and the other basket of very bad figs, which were inedible." 37 Maseches Eruvin 21b. These are the sinners of Yisroel. Now, both of them emit their fragrance; they all seek Your countenance.
And at our door are all luscious fruits. In our possession there is the reward for fulfilling many commandments.
Both new and old. Those which the Sages innovated, as well as the old ones, which You wrote for me.
I have kept them for you. For Your Name and for Your service I have kept them in my heart. Another explanation, I kept them to show You that I have fulfilled them.

Chapter 8

Verse 1

If only you were a brother to me. That you would come to comfort me in the manner that Yoseif did to his brothers, 1 Alternatively, if only my desire that my relationship with God, i.e., to be near Him and to pursue His holiness were out of love, as one's relatioship is with his brother. (Sforno) who did evil to him, and it is stated concerning him, "and he comforted them." 2 The Gemara in Bechoros 8a states, that from the time of an apple tree's blossoming until its fruits are ripened, a period of sixty days elapse. Accordingly, an apple represents the sixty masechtos incorporated into the Oral Law. Mount Sinai was suspended over Bnei Yisroel's heads "like an apple" in order to arouse them to accept the Oral Law of the Torah. (Yosef Beor)
When I would find you outside I would kiss you. I would find Your prophets speaking in Your Name, and I would embrace them and kiss them; I also know that "no one would scorn me," for Your love is worthy that Your beloved should go about in search of it.

Verse 2

To my mother’s house. The Beis Hamikdosh.
That you should teach me. As You were accustomed to do in the Tent of Meeting.
I would give you spiced wine to drink. Libations.
Of the nectar. Sweet wine.

Verse 3

His left hand is under my head, etc.

Verse 4

I bind you under oath. Now the congregation of Yisroel addresses the nations, “Even though I complain and lament, my Beloved holds my hand, and He is my support in my exile; therefore, ‘I bind you under oath.’” Why should you cause hatred or disturb. For it will be of no avail.

Verse 5

Who is she. The Holy One, Blessed Is He, and His Tribunal, say about the congregation of Yisroel, “Who is she?” How very worthy she is, who was ascended from the wilderness with all the good gifts. There she became elevated at the giving of the Torah and cleaving to the Divine Presence, and her love was visible to all, and while still in her exile—
Clinging to her beloved. She is attached to her Beloved, admitting that she is His companion and attached to Him. “רפק” [is found] in the Arabic word “רפקתא,” [which means] attachment.
Beneath the apple tree I aroused you. So she says as she seeks the affection of her Beloved; “Beneath the apple tree I aroused You.” Remember that under Mount Sinai, which was suspended over my head like an apple, 3 Bereishis 50:21. there “I aroused You.” This is an expression of the affection of the wife of one’s youth, who arouses her beloved at night when he is asleep on his bed, and she embraces him and kisses him.
There [your mother] had birth pains. We have already stated that the Holy One, Blessed Is He, called her [Yisroel] His mother. 4 Above 3:11. There she became to You as a mother.
Birth pains. An expression of birth pangs. Birth pains. Birth pangs came to her from You, as in, “my children have left me,” 5 Yirmiyahu 10:20. [i.e.,] they went away from me.

Verse 6

Set me as a seal. For the sake of that love, seal me upon Your heart, 6 In the same manner that a seal is affixed on one’s hand and is not removed, so too, set me as a seal upon Your heart. (Metzudas Dovid) so that You do not forget me, and You will see.
For love is as strong as death. The extent of my love that I loved You is to me equal to my death, for I am killed for Your sake. 7 My love to You is so strong that I would choose death before relinquishing my love for You. (Metzudas Dovid)
Jealousy is as harsh as the grave. The quarrel that the nations were jealous and quarreled with me because of You. “קְנְאָה” every place [in Scripture] means enprenment in O.F., an expression of conveying feelings to wreak vengeance.
Fire from the flame of God. Coals of a strong fire that comes from the force of the flame of Gehinnom. The cantillation symbol of the zakef gadol, which punctuates “רִשְׁפֵּי” teaches us about the word “אֵשׁ [fire],” that it is connected to “שַׁלְהֶבֶתְיָה,” meaning “fire from the flame of God.”

Verse 7

Many waters cannot quench the love. Since he refers to them with an expression of coals, the term "cannot quench" is appropriate for them. 8 The pain and suffering that Bnei Yisroel endured throughout its many exiles, "cannot quench the love [for God]," which remains intact. (Sefer Dudaim)
Many waters. The nations.
And rivers. Their princes and their kings.
Cannot drown it. Through force or terror, or even through enticement and seduction.
If a man would give all the wealth of his house. In exchange for your love.
They would surely scorn him. On all these the Holy One, Blessed Is He, and His Tribunal, 9 Rashi adds, "and His Tribunal," because the Verse following begins with "We...", the plural form. (Sifsei Chachomim) testify that to this extent the congregation of Yisroel clings to her Beloved. Now—

Verse 8

We have a [little] sister. In the earthly abode, who unites, joins and desires to be with us, and she is little and humbles herself more than all the nations, as the matter is stated, "Not because you are more numerous, etc." 10 Devorim 7:7. for they humble themselves.
A [little] sister. אָחוֹת is] an expression of joining, [as in,] "These are the rends that may not be sewn up completely 11 ".מִתְאַחִין Maseches Mo'ed Katan 26a.
But she has no breasts. As the matter is stated concerning the exile of Egypt, "[Her] breasts were developed," 12 Yechezkeil 16:7; connoting the readiness for redemption. when the time of the redemption arrived, but this one, "she has no breasts;" her time has not yet arrived for the time of love. What shall we do for our sister
on the day she is spoken for. When the nations whisper about her to destroy her, as the matter is stated, "Come, let us destroy them from being a nation." 13 Tehillim 83:5.

Verse 9

If she be a wall. If she is strong in her faith and in her fear of God, to be against them like a copper wall, that they should not enter her midst, meaning that she will not intermarry with them, and they will not intermingle with her, and she will not be seduced by them.
We will build upon her a fortress of silver. We will become for her a fortified city and for a crown and beauty, and we will build for her the Holy City and the Temple.
If she be a door. Which turns on its hinges, and opens whenever someone knocks on it, she, too, if she opens for them so that they enter her and she into them. 14 I.e., intermarry, intermingle.
We will enclose her with panels of cedar. We will put on her door wooden panels which rot and which the worm gnaws and eats. Thereupon, the congregation of Yisroel replies—

Verse 10

I am a wall. Strong in the love of my Beloved.
And my bosom is like towers. These are the synagogues and the study halls, which nurture Yisroel with words of Torah.
Therefore. When I say this.

I am in his eyes as one who found peace. Like a bride who is found to be perfect שָׁלֵם=שְׁלֵמָה, and who finds peace in her husband's house. 15 See Maseches Pesachim 87a.

Verse 11

Shlomo had a vineyard. This is the congregation of Yisroel, as it is stated, "For the vineyard of Adonoy, Master of Legions, is the house of Yisroel." 16 Yeshayahu 5:7.
In the Plain of Hamon. In Yerusholayim, which is populous and has a multitude of people [=הָמוֹן.
Ba'al. An expression denoting a plain, as in, "from the Plain מִבַּעַל of Gad in the Levanon valley." 17 Yehoshua 12:7.
He gave over the vineyard to caretakers. He delivered her into the hands of harsh masters, Bavel, Madai, Greece, and Edom. In Midrash Shir Hashirim, I found some support concerning these "caretakers," that they are these kingdoms.
Each of them brought for its fruit. Whatever they could collect from them, [e.g.,] head taxes, tithes, and illegal foreclosures; they collected everything from them to bring into their homes. 18 I.e., they kept for themselves whatever monies they collected.

Verse 12

My vineyard is before me. On the Day of Judgement, the Holy One, Blessed Is He, will bring them to judgement, and He will say, "My vineyard, even though I delivered it into your hands, it is Mine, and before Me is all that you seized for yourselves, of its fruit, and it is not hidden from Me what you collected from them." And they will reply—
The thousand are yours Shlomo. "The thousand silver pieces that we collected from them, we will return everything to You." And two hundred for those who guard its fruit. "And we will add much more of our own, and we will give it to them, to their leaders and their sages," as the matter is stated, "In place of the copper I will bring gold." 19 Yeshayahu 60:17.
For those who guard its fruit. These are the Torah scholars, and those payments are for the Torah scholars, as it is stated, "but to those who sit before Adonoy belong its merchandise," 20 Ibid. 23:18. and the hire of Tzor. And it can also be explained, "and two hundred for those who guard its fruit," according to the law of a person who derives benefit from consecrated property, that he must pay the principal and a fifth. We too will pay, for, "Yisroel is holy to Adonoy, the first of His produce," 21 Yirmiyahu 2:3. the principal and a fifth, i.e., a fifth of the principal, and two hundred is a fifth of a thousand.

Verse 13

You who sit in the gardens. The Holy One, Blessed Is He, says to the congregation of Yisroel, "You, who are scattered in exile, grazing in the gardens of strangers and sitting in synagogues and study halls."
Companions listen to your voice. The ministering angels your friends, children of God like you, hearken and come to listen to your voice in the synagogues.
Let me hear [your voice]. And afterwards, they will sanctify [My Name], as it is stated, "When the morning stars sing together." 22 Iyov 38:7. These are the Israelites, and afterwards, "and all the angels of God shout praise." 23 Ibid.

Verse 14

Flee my beloved. From this exile, and redeem us from among them.
And be like a gazelle. To hasten the redemption, and to cause Your Divine Presence to rest— Upon the mountains of spices. This is Mount Moriyah and the Beis Hamikdosh, may it be rebuilt speedily and in our days, Amen.